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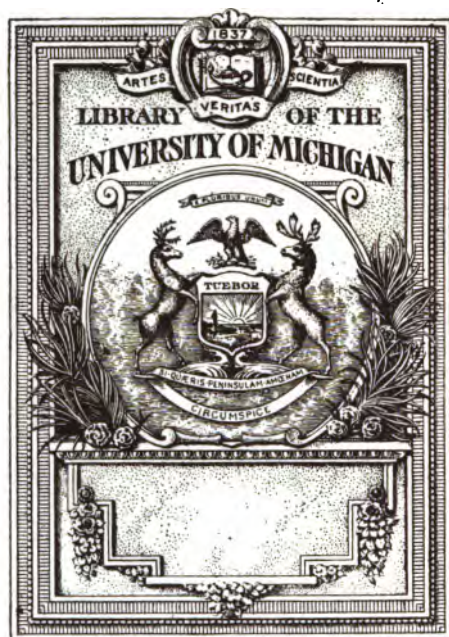
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FATA MORGANA



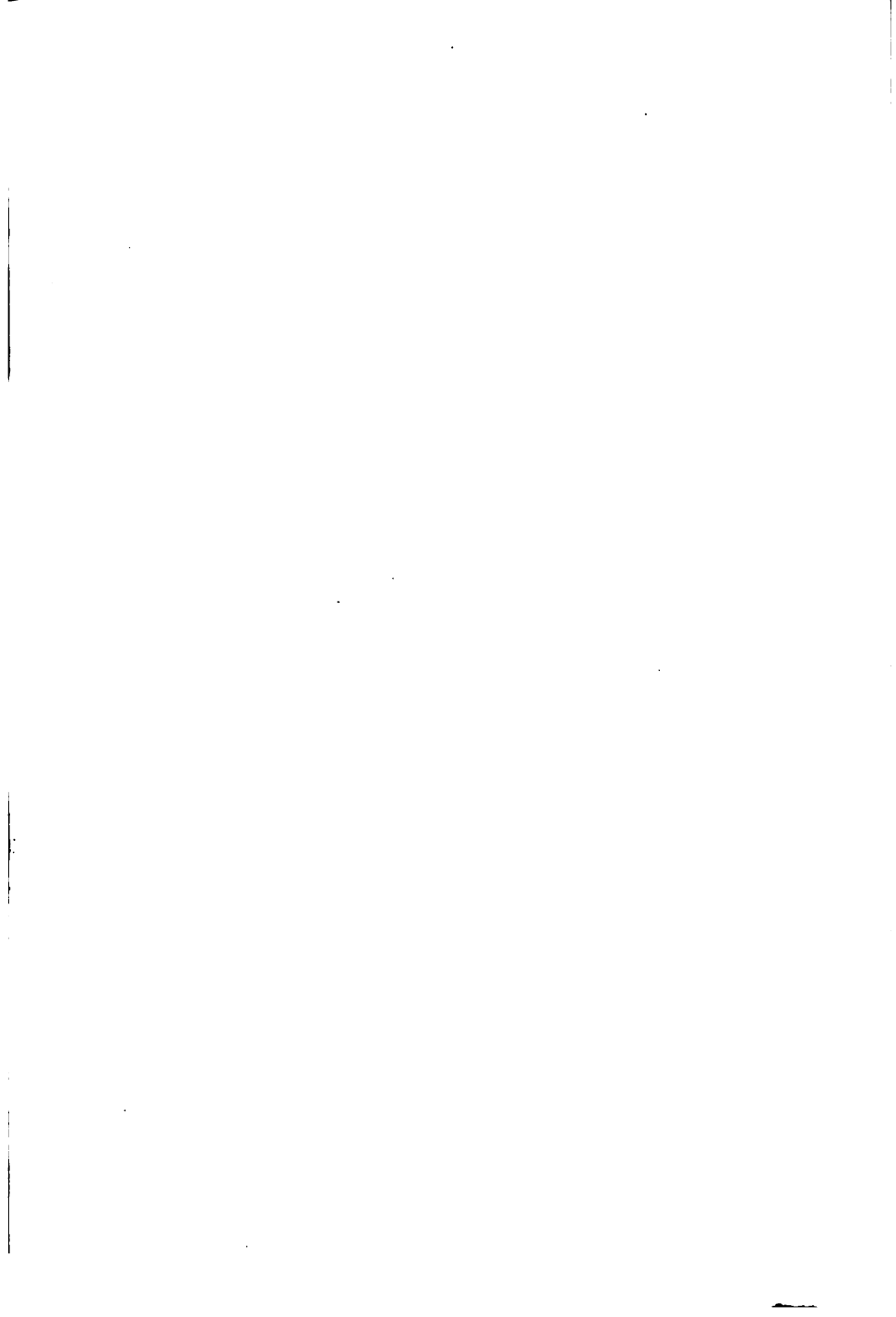
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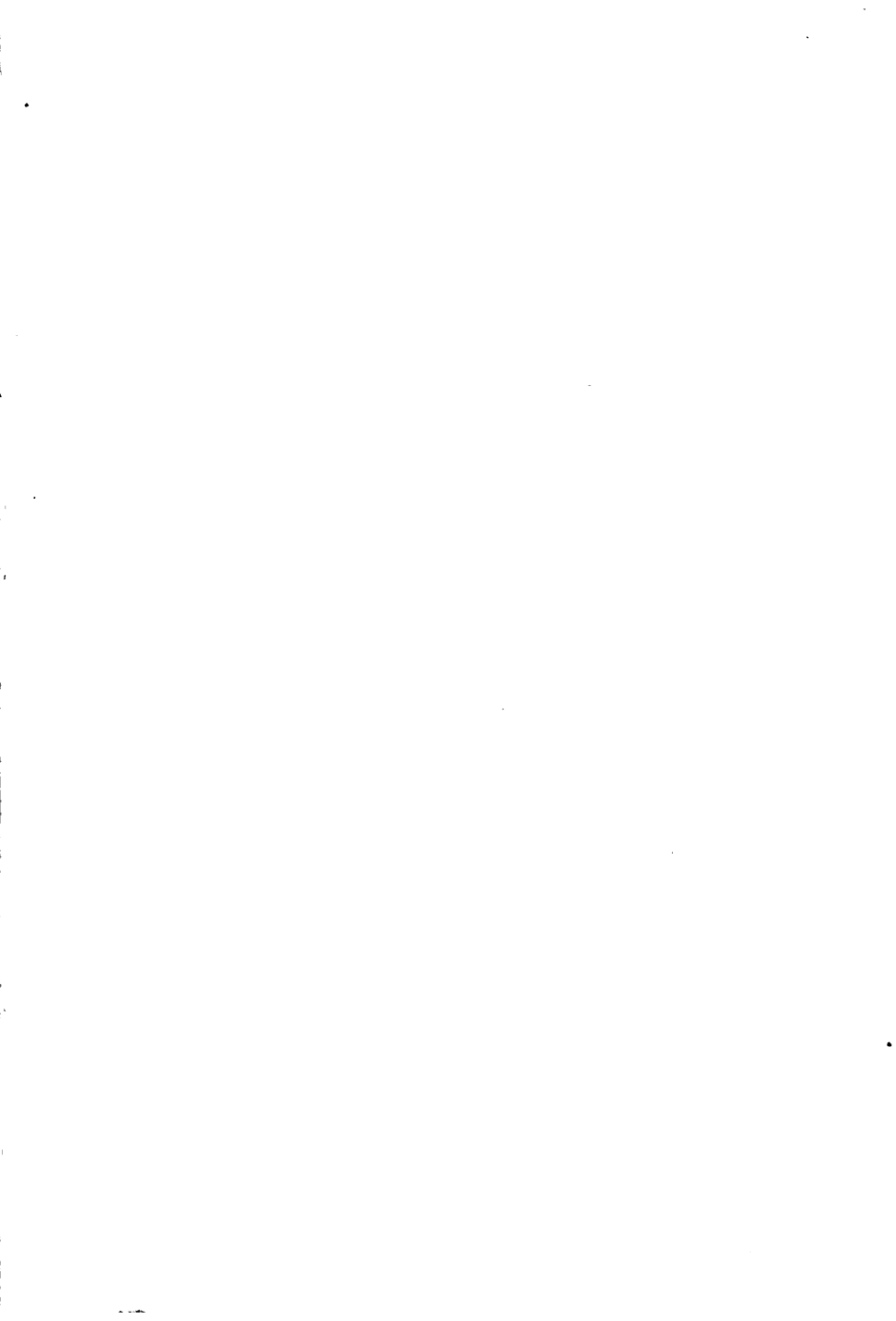






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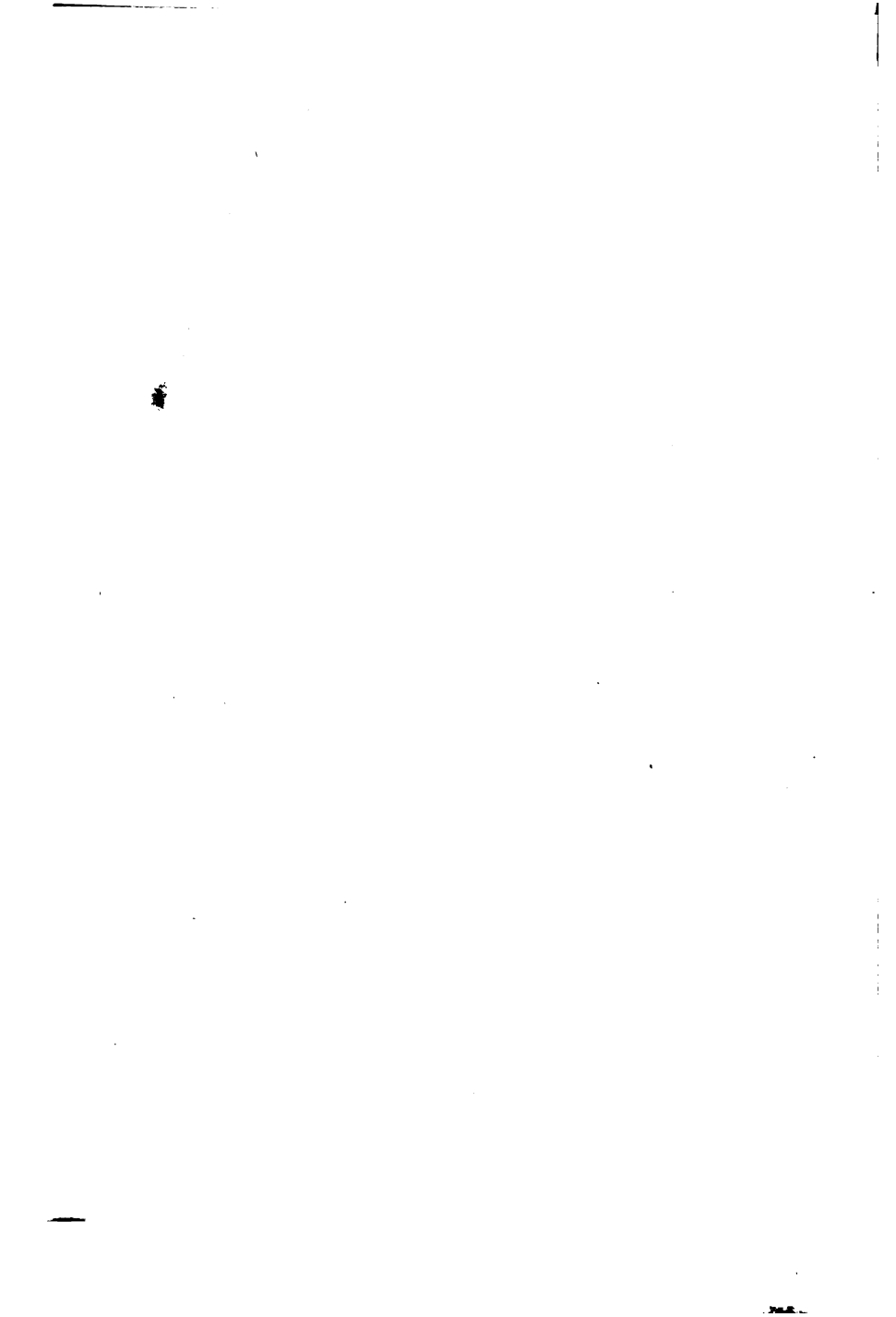






“Helia at the very summit of the car”





FATA MORGANA

A ROMANCE OF ART STUDENT
LIFE IN PARIS

BY

ANDRÉ CASTAIGNE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
BY THE AUTHOR



NEW YORK
THE CENTURY CO.

1904



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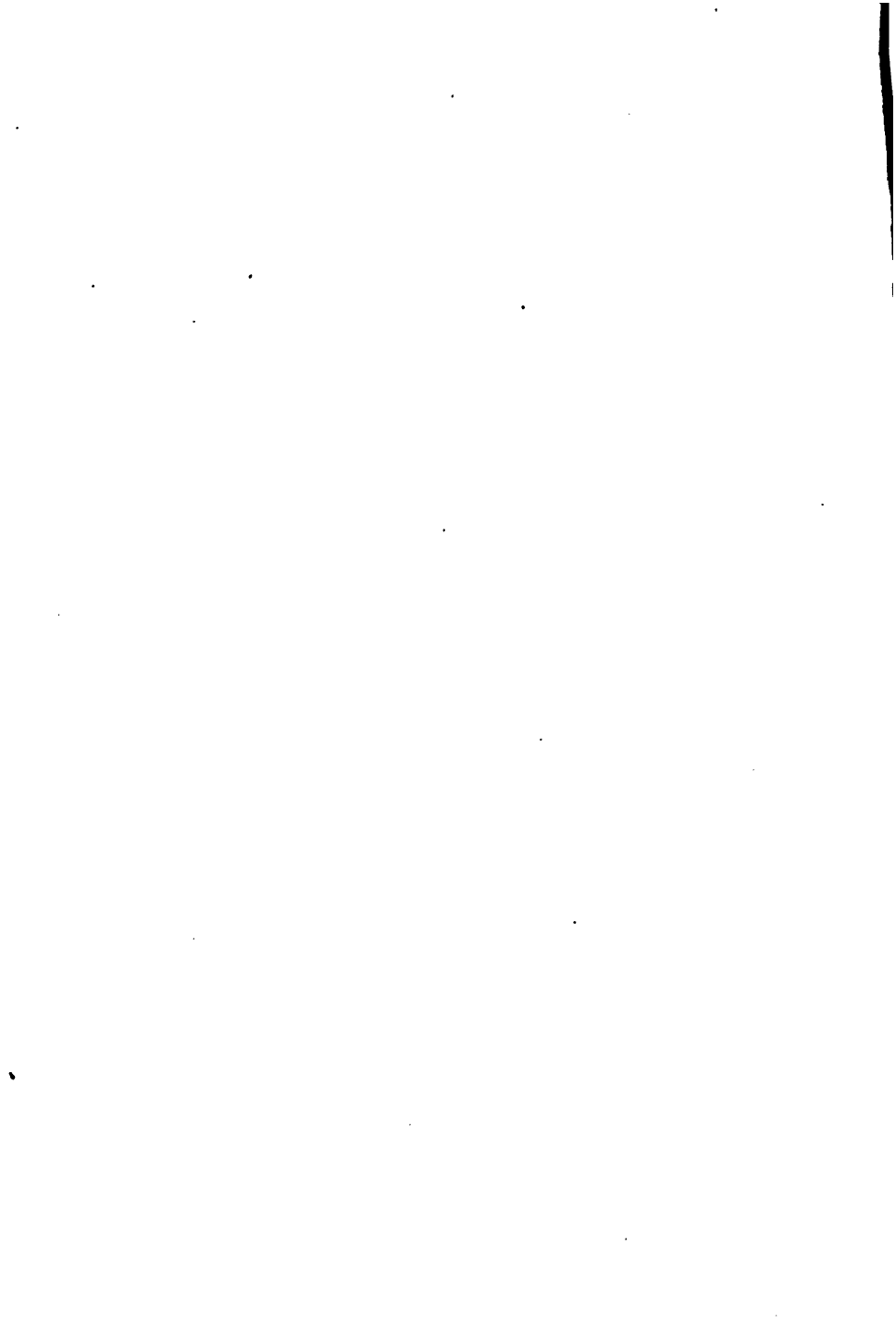
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TO HIS MANY FRIENDS IN AMERICA
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR

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PART I
ETHEL AND HELIA



FATA MORGANA

CHAPTER I

AFTER THE QUAT'Z-ARTS BALL

AT daybreak, Phil Longwill, the young American painter, entered his studio, threw away his cigar, gulped down the contents of his water-jug—and then slipped into an arm-chair and dozed.

What a night!

In his half-sleep he thought he was still at the Quat'z-Arts Ball, from which he had just come; he still heard the murmuring noise of the multitude, like the prolonged "moo-o-o" of oxen in the stable; and there still moved before his eyes the restless throng, masked in the skins of beasts or trailing gilt-embroidered mantles.

His dreaming had the sharp relief of life; but it was the car on which Helia was drawn—Helia the circus-girl, the little friend of his boyhood, whom he had not seen for so long and whom he found here with surprise—it was this car, with the superb figure of Helia at its summit, which eclipsed all the rest.

The car itself was an attention of Phil's friends. They had chosen for its subject the personages of the

"Fata Morgana"—a great decorative picture which Phil was finishing for the Duke of Morgania.

Helia, upright at the very summit of the car, like an idol at the pinnacle of a temple, personified Morgana, the fairy, the saint, the legendary Queen of the Adriatic. Lower down, seated at the four corners, Thilda, Marka, Rhodaïs the slave, and Bertha the Amazon—the four heroines of Morgania—kept watch and ward over their queen.

The car, drawn by knights, advanced amid hushed admiration. Helia seemed to float above the sea of heads, and behind her the great hall was ablaze with lights.

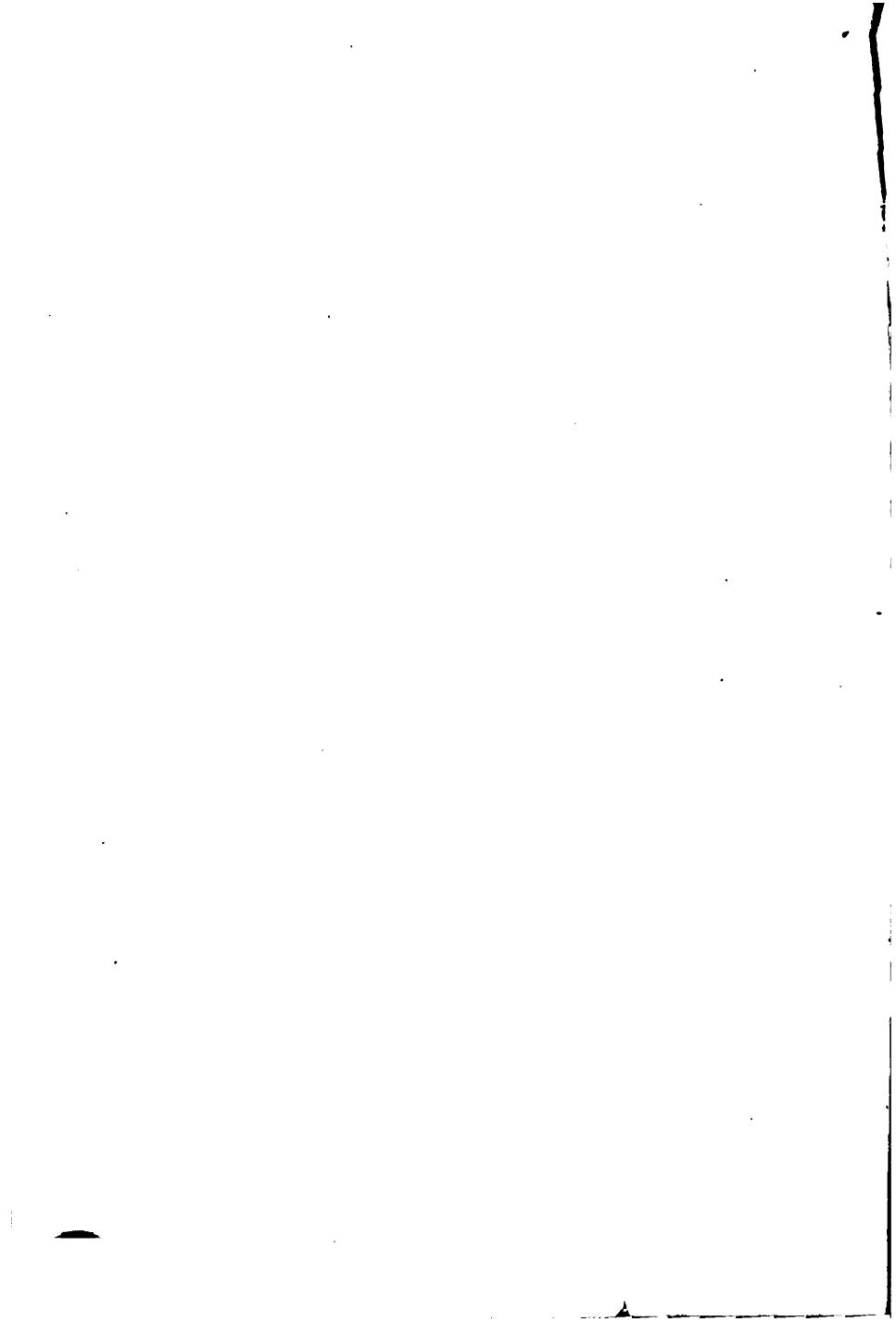
Phil, dozing in his arm-chair, saw himself, clad in his magnificent Indian costume, marching at the head of the car, brandishing his tomahawk in honor of Morgana. Then, at the breaking up of the cortège when the procession was over, there were the supper-tables taken by storm amid cries and laughter.

And the feast began.

Helmets and swords ceased to shine. Hands laid down battle-axes to wield knives and forks; warriors fell upon the food as they might have done after a night of pillage. Each man kissed his fair neighbor. Poufaille, the sculptor, disguised as the prehistoric man, put his hairy muzzle against the rosy cheeks of Suzanne, his model. Close at hand, Phil, the Indian chief, seated at the table of the Duke of Morgania, talked with Helia of old times, of the strolling circus in which he had known her, of their meeting in her dressing-room below the benches; and he said to her in a low voice:



The Concierge



"Do you remember when I used to go to wait for you?"

"And you," answered Helia, "the flowers you gave me—do you remember?"

But now it was full day and the sun was lighting up the studio. Phil's memories faded little by little, scattered by the early morning cries of Paris. The shrill piping of the wandering plumber awakened him with a start just as he was dropping off into real sleep and seeing in his dream Helia soar through a strange world amid heavenly splendors.

"Here's the morning paper, M. Longwill," said the old concierge, who came up with the mail; but he stopped short with open mouth at the sight of Phil's costume. To dress one's self like that! *Etait-il Dieu possible!* They did n't have such ideas in his time!

Certainly, Phil was an odd figure in his Indian dress. If he lowered his head he risked scratching his chin against the bear's claws of his collar. He was clad in leather and glass beads. There were feathers down his legs and a calumet was stuck in his belt. At his feet lay the tomahawk which he had brandished a few hours before in honor of beautiful Helia. He had the look of a veritable savage. No one would have recognized in him the society painter, descendant of Philidor de Longueville, the Protestant banished from France by Louis XIV, who became a great proprietor in Virginia.

"Ah, monsieur," the concierge began again, "in the old times when you took walks with Mlle. Helia in my garden on the roofs of the Louvre, where I was inspector, you did n't need to dress up like that to amuse yourself. Ah, it was the good time then! I remember one day—"

"I say, concierge," interrupted Phil, in a solemn tone; "go down quick and get me a bottle of seltzer water. I am dying of thirst!"

The concierge disappeared.

"Ouf!" Phil gave a sigh of relief. "The old man, with his good old times, was starting off on his remembrances. He is in for two hours when he begins with the Louvre garden. Bah! that's all fol-de-rol," he added, smoothing his hair with his hand, "not to speak of my having so many things to do this morning. Let's see: first, Miss Rowrer; then the duke is to bring Helia. It appears that Helia has the legendary Morgana type,—so the duke told me, after seeing her last night,—and, at the duke's request, she agrees to pose for my picture. Oh, I was forgetting! I am expecting Caracal also."

Phil detested Caracal. This critic was his *bête noire*, a man sweet and bitter at the same time, who talked of him behind his back as a painter for pork-packers and a dauber without talent.

Phil had never forgotten his first impression of the critic. He met him shortly after his arrival in Paris, in the studio of the sculptor Poufaille, and later on in the Restaurant de la Mère Michel, and at the Café des Deux Magots, during his student years. Caracal was outwardly correct and an intimate friend of the duke, and he was received at the Rowrers'; and Phil had to be agreeable to him. Nevertheless, he was going to play him a trick.

As he opened the morning paper, Phil looked around to assure himself that the pictures in his studio had their faces turned to the wall, and that his painting of the

Fata Morgana was covered with a veil. It was for Caracal's benefit that he had made these arrangements the evening before; and he smiled as he gave a glance at the portière which separated his studio from a little adjoining room, where his trick was ready.

"Ah, I 'm commonplace, am I—no originality? We shall see!" he said to himself, laughing.

"What 's the news?" Phil went on, as he looked absently through the paper. "'A Description of the Bal des Quat'z-Arts.' Pass!—'A Case of Treason.' Pass!—'War Declared.' *Diable!* 'The Fleet of the Prince of Monaco Threatening English Ports.' Pass!—Good! Here 's another extract from the 'Tocsin': 'The Tomb of Richard the Lion-hearted to be Stolen from France! Interference of Yankee Gold in French Politics,' signed 'An Indignant Patriot.' "

The foolishness of the article did not prevent Phil's reading it to the end.

"That 's all very amusing," he thought; "but why these personal allusions? What have the Rowers to do with it? And who can be writing such nonsense?"

Phil turned the page disdainfully, when a sound in the room made him lift his eyes.

Caracal stood before him.

Phil had not heard him come in. Caracal entered without knocking, as the concierge in his hurry had forgotten to close the door. The critic looked mockingly at Phil, like those devils who, in German legends, start up from a hole in the floor and offer you some crooked bargain in exchange for your soul. He greeted Phil with an affectation of politeness.

"How are you, *cher ami*?"

Caracal turned the glitter of his monocle on the Indian costume.

"Very, very curious—very amusing—very American! From last night's ball, doubtless?"

For once there was nothing to say, and Caracal was right. It was really very American.

Occupied with his paper, Phil had forgotten to change his costume. He rose, excused himself briefly, and asked after Caracal's health.

"Thanks, *cher ami*, I 'm very well; allow me to admire you!"

"Wait a bit," thought Phil to himself. "I 'll give you something to admire!"

But Caracal, with his squirrel-like activity, was already inspecting the studio and the pictures which were turned with their faces to the wall.

"Oh, ho!" he asked, "so you blush for your work, *mon cher*? Yet your talent is very interesting, very American."

"Don't let us talk of such trifles," said Phil; "I show them only to the ignorant. You're not really acquainted with my works, M. Caracal—those which I paint for myself alone, those into which I put my soul, as your friend, the painter-philosopher Socrate, used to say. Allow me to show them to you. Enter, M. Caracal!"

Lifting the portière of the little room, Phil showed the way to Caracal, who stopped on the threshold in amazement. Phil was fond of practical jokes. With imperturbable seriousness he had gathered in this room all the grotesque works which he had found among the art-

junk-dealers in his chance explorations. If he found a picture cast aside,—provided it was utterly bad,—Phil bought it. There was one canvas, among the others, which represented cows—something so fearful that Phil, the first time he saw it, scarcely knew whether to groan, or shout with laughter.

It was in his concierge's lodge that Phil one day had conceived the idea of this collection. The old man of "my time," the former inspector of the Louvre roofs, had on his chimney under bell-glasses two little personages—Monsieur and Madame—made from lobster-shells; a claw formed the nose, and the tail was turned into coat-skirts.

"Eureka!" thought Phil, when he saw them. "But I must have something better still." And he at once began a search through the slums of impressionism and modern style; and he had found what he wanted.

"*Eh bien*, M. Caracal, what do you think of that?" asked Phil.

Caracal, at first upset, pulled himself together.

"Bravo, *mon cher*! you 've found your line! You are revealed to yourself! My congratulations, *cher ami*!"

"Does the ignoramus take it seriously?—No; that would be too funny!" Phil said to himself amazed in his turn.

Phil, with his glass beads jingling at every step, took the cow painting and set it in full light. The frightful beasts lowered their crocodile heads to graze in a fantastic meadow whose daisies resembled white plates with egg-yolks in the middle.

Phil looked at Caracal and winked his eye. Caracal

answered by a prudent shrug. Phil was one of those rare Americans who can shrug and wink. The mute dialogue went on:

"That catches you, *mon vieux* Caracal!" said the wink.

"Idiot!" answered the shoulders; "you 'll pay me for this—to make fun of me—Caracal!"

"Each has his turn!" winked Phil.

Caracal fixed his eye-glass and stared at the picture.

"Very—very interesting—very original. That 's art—that ought to be at the Luxembourg! Ought n't it, *cher ami*?"

"The deuce!" thought Phil.

"And this, look at this!" said Caracal, taking up an abominable sketch for a pork-butcher's sign. "Here 's the quintessence of animalism! Bravo, *mon cher*, you 're the man I 'm looking for!"

"Indeed!" exclaimed Phil, to himself.

"Let me explain. I am looking for an aritst to illustrate my new novel."

Phil made a gesture of protest.

"No commonplace book," Caracal went on, "but a bitter, bleeding slice of life—something which takes you by the throat, makes you weep and shriek and pant!"

Caracal explained his book. The general idea (an idea of genius, according to him) was this: A vast house rises in the midst of Paris, all of glass, transparent from top to bottom, without curtains. Therein swarm all the vices; yet there are no crimes, so soft and weak-willed are the personages, so incapable of anger or hatred. And they drag themselves from floor to floor, on all-fours like



The Cow Painting

swine. Title, "The House of Glass"—and there you are!

"And you offer me collaboration in such nastiness?" said Phil.

"Do you know what you are saying?" replied Caracal.

"It's my idea of your literature, and I say what I think."

"Let it be so, *mon cher*; we'll say no more about it. Rather let us look at your beautiful works. That cow painting is superb! It's as fine as a Millet. If it's for sale, I'll buy it!"

"If you want it, take it. I won't sell it. I'll give it to you."

They came back into the studio. Caracal, well pleased with the gift, swung his monocle familiarly. Then they talked of other things, of yesterday's ball, of the "Toc-sin," whose sensational head-lines stared at them from the floor.

"What do you think of that?" Phil asked, pointing to the newspaper.

"It's idiotic, *mon cher*, utterly idiotic. I don't know where Vieillecloche picks up such asinine stuff."

"Who does the articles for him?" demanded Phil.

"Who knows?" answered Caracal.

With a glance at the clock, Phil excused himself.

"Will you permit me? I must get ready—the concierge is going to do up the studio. Be seated, please; I'll be with you again in a moment."

Caracal sat down on a lounge to wait for Phil, who went to his room to change his Indian costume.

The concierge returned. He began dusting the studio, and in his zeal rubbed off half a pastel with his feather duster. He pulled the veil from sketches, and set the easels in place. The studio began to be peopled with half-finished portraits, with designs, with studies of every kind, representing an immense amount of labor. The canvas of Morgana, in particular, rid of the cover which veiled it, illuminated all with a glow of legend. The figure of the fairy queen was barely indicated; but Helia was to pose for Phil, as she had promised, and with a month's work all would be finished.

Caracal, in spite of his jealous ignorance, could not help admiring the superb production; but he rubbed his hands as he thought of the picture of the cows which he was going to carry away with him. He glanced slyly at Phil, who came back smartly dressed and refreshed from his bath, fit and full of the joy of life, ready for work, in spite of his sleepless night.

CHAPTER II

THE FATA MORGANA

PHIL prepared his colors. The ball was forgotten, and the Indian costume was laid away for another year. Outside, the cries of the plumber and old-clo' man alternated, like a trombone after a fife; and a barrel-organ was grinding below on the sidewalk. Phil, brushes in hand, spoke now and then a word with Caracal, lying on the sofa.

"Here are my visitors," said Phil, suddenly.

From the stairway came the sound of voices, the light tread of feet, the swish of skirts.

The bell rang.

"I was waiting for you, M. le Duc," said Phil, as he opened the door. "Come in, I beg of you! Come in, Mlle. Helia!"

"I have brought you Mlle. Helia," the duke said. "You know, she consents to pose for you. Look! she's not even tired after such a night!"

"Oh, as for me, I'm used to it," said Helia,—“a little more or a little less!”

Caracal came bustling up, shaking hands energetically, as he always did.

"Show the duke your little gallery," he said in a low

tone to Phil. "You're too modest—you mustn't hide your light under a bushel."

"Pshaw! he wouldn't appreciate it," said Phil.

They stood before the Morgana painting. Helia, strongly impressed by the luxury of the studio, looked around with astonishment. She remembered Phil's beginnings in his attic by the quays of the Seine.

The duke turned toward him: "Superb! It is very beautiful! Allow me to congratulate you, Monsieur Phil!"

Phil bowed.

Conrad di Tagliaferro, Duke of Morgana, was a *grand seigneur*, who left his duchy to take care of itself, and passed half his time in his Paris mansion. His people believed him to be quite taken up with politics, discussing *mordicus* with the representatives of the Great Powers, and securing support against the coming storm. For the duchy was on the banks of the Adriatic, lower than Montenegro, and backed up against Albania, where the clouds threatened. The duke, meanwhile, went about with Caracal, his professor of elegant vice, and his handsome presence was a part of *Tout-Paris*.

"Your picture is a masterpiece, Monsieur Phil," the duke went on. "It would be impossible to interpret better the legend of my ancestress, Morgana. It will hang well in the great hall of the castle, above the ducal throne—I see it from here. You have quite caught what I wished, and I am grateful to you."

The great painting took up a whole side of the studio, and its effect was superb under the light, which fell in floods. It was a decorative work, which, from the first, impressed the beholder by its look of strangeness.

Phil was familiar with the mirage which is peculiar to the Adriatic Sea, and which is known as the Fata Morgana.

In the morning oftenest, but sometimes at evening, you suddenly perceive in the sky images of various things—of ruined towers and castles, which crumble and change and take on prodigious shapes. The dwellers of the coast call the phenomenon the Fata Morgana; their superstitious ideas lead them to see in it the enchantments of a fairy (*fata*), whereas it is simply an effect of the mirage caused by the heating of the sea. This was the moment which Phil had chosen for his picture.

The lower part of the canvas was in shadow, but the upper part was resplendent with light; and towers seemed to rise and arches hang above the abyss, while visions appeared between the clouds. The setting sun lighted up with its dying fires the moving mists, whereon rainbow tints were playing. At the horizon the sea mingled with the clouds. Morgana rose from the waves which broke along the beach. Strange sea-flowers clung to her hair and covered her shoulders. In the background, cliffs fell straight down to the sea; and all along the shore an ecstatic people acclaimed the return of their lady, the Duchess Morgana.

Phil had put all his talent into this picture. Months of implacable labor were in it. The duke, who had not yet seen the finished canvas, seemed delighted. Phil was paid for his labors.

The Duke of Morgania had a love for art and artists. He chatted in a friendly way with Phil of the numerous studies which such a picture demands.

"I should have liked to be a painter," he said, smiling. "I am infatuated with the bohemian life!"

"It has n't been all amusement to me," replied Phil.
"Art is not easy, *allez!*"

"It's about the same in everything; nothing is easy," Helia observed.

She entered into the conversation timidly. Accustomed as she had been from childhood to brave a thousand eyes in the circus ring, Helia felt herself embarrassed in the sumptuous studio where she found Phil, friend of her childhood and youth—Phil, who had been so fond of her then, and who doubtless loved her still. She would know soon,—when they were alone,—if only by the way in which he would take her hand.

"It is the same in everything. You are right, *mademoiselle*," the duke answered. "Yours is an art also."

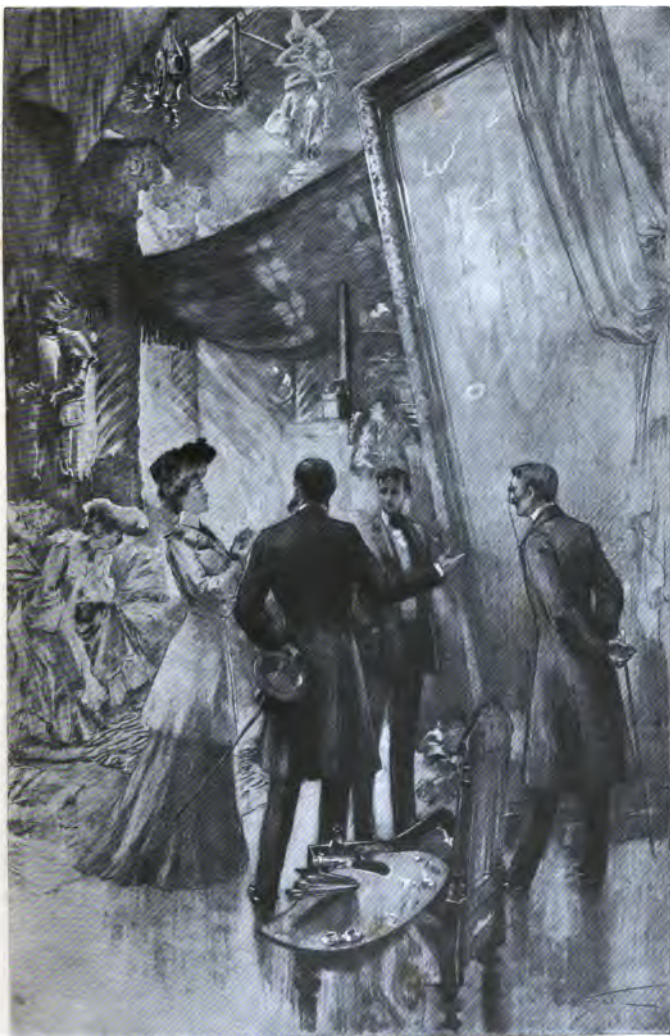
Helia blushed with pleasure.

"Phil will be proud of me," she thought.

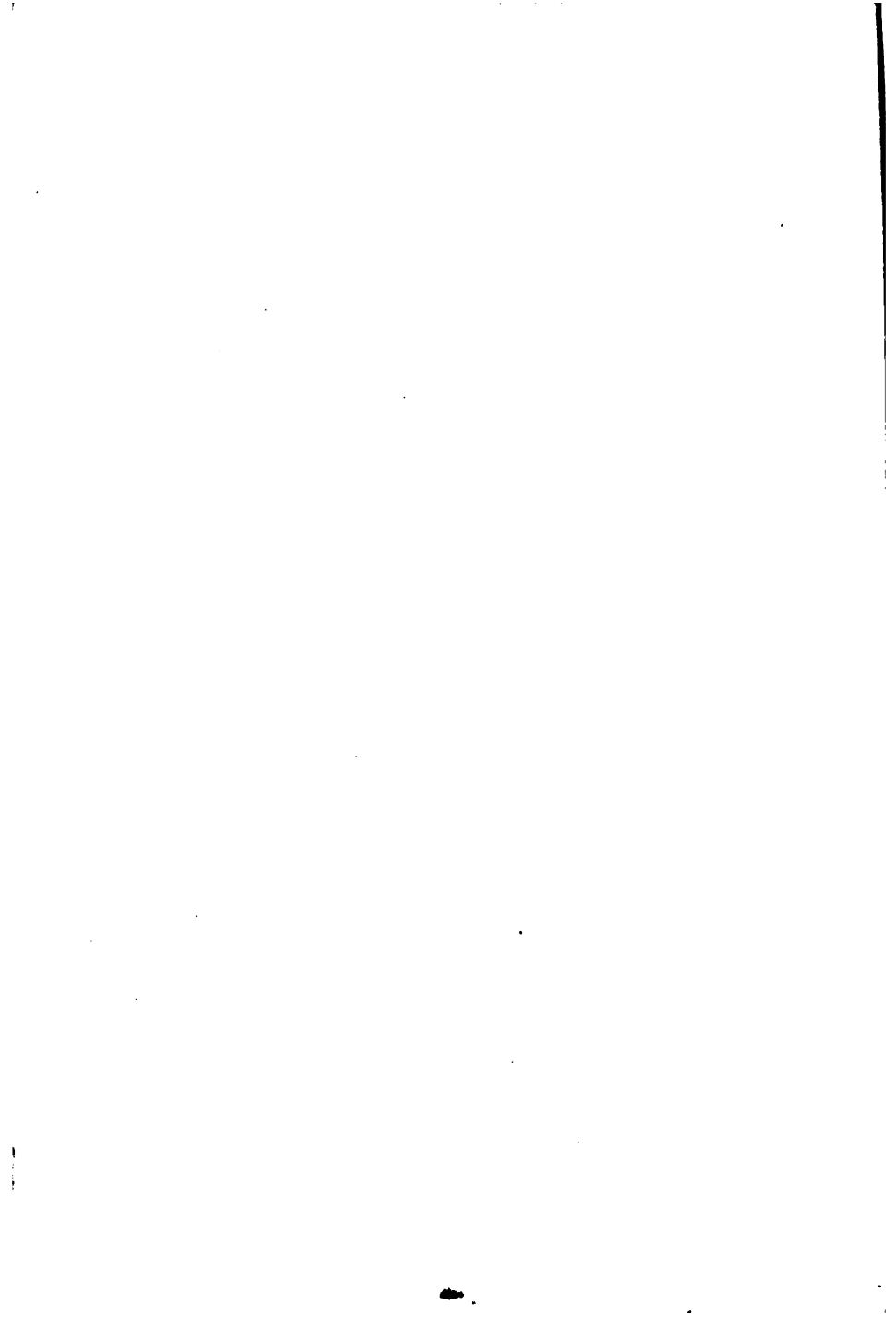
"But she's taking it seriously, the little mountebank," Cardinal murmured to himself. "She is as big a fool as Phil, on my word!"

"*Mon cher ami*," the duke said to Phil, "Mlle. Helia has a singular resemblance to Morgana. For we have documents concerning the appearance of Morgana—Sansovino's statue at Ancona, for example, the Botticelli of the Louvre, and the stained-glass window of the throne-room in the ducal castle, as well as numberless pictures scattered through the cottages of Morgana. There is an admitted classic type. You will only have to finish the figure of my ancestress with Mlle. Helia, and your picture will be perfect."

"And what happiness for me!" said Helia. "Phil—Monsieur Phil will do my portrait!"



The Great Canvas



But Phil interrupted Helia to keep the duke, who was on the point of departing:

"Wait a moment; Miss Ethel Rowrer is coming to see the picture. She is over there in the students' atelier. I'll go and tell her."

Phil went out; doors were heard opening and closing; and then he came back with Miss Rowrer, whom he had found just quitting her work. She was fastening a bouquet of Parma violets at her waist, and was ready to come.

Miss Rowrer entered.

She was tall and pink and blonde. She had distinguished features, with a wilful forehead and solid chin. Her beauty and her practice of outdoor sports gave her a self-confidence which was superb, while the prestige of the name of her father—the famous Chicagoan—and his colossal fortune were as nothing when she looked you in the face with her clear eyes, lighted up with intelligence. As soon as she entered the studio there seemed to be no one else there.

Miss Rowrer nodded familiarly to Caracal and the duke, habitués of the Comtesse de Donjeon's teas, where she had made their acquaintance, as well as that of Phil, some months previously. She cast a discreet glance at Helia. As for Phil, whose pupil she was and whose talent she admired, she treated him as a friend.

They began talking immediately. Miss Rowrer spoke of her brother Will, of his yacht, still in the dock at Boston, but which was soon to sail for France; of his autumn cruise in the Mediterranean; then, changing

the subject, she talked of art and literature, lightly, without pose.

"How can any one find time," thought Helia, "to learn so many pretty things!"

"Is that your Morgana picture?" Miss Rowrer asked Phil, pointing to the great canvas. "That half-painted figure will doubtless be Morgana herself—it is very beautiful. But," she added, as she turned to the duke, "explain it to me a little, will you? I am not acquainted with the subject."

"What, Miss Rowrer! You know everything, and you don't know the legend of Morgana!"

"Only by name," said Miss Rowrer. "In my picture-books there used to be Bluebeard and ogres and ugly wolves, who made me afraid—and the good fairies Mélusine and Morgana, who delighted me. They did so much good with their magic wands!"

"Morgana is my ancestress," said the duke. "She is my good genius. There is not a cottage in Morgania where her picture does not hang, next to the icons of the Virgin. In the winter evenings, around the fire, they recount her exploits and those of Rhodaïs and Bertha. Children grow up with it in their blood; they no more think of their country without its heroines than without its woods and mountains."

"And what particular event have you chosen for this picture?" asked Miss Rowrer. "Is it the coming of Morgana?"

"By the sea she departed," said the duke, "and she has never come back. Yet she will come, they say."

"You laugh at it?"

"Not at all," answered the duke. "Such things seen in the light of Paris appear altogether ridiculous; but away in Morgania there are thousands of good people—or thousands of foolish people, if you wish—" the duke corrected himself, in terror of the mocking smile of Caracal, his professor of skepticism—"thousands of foolish people who talk of nothing else and await her return."

"But when did she go away?" asked Miss Rowrer.

"Oh, ah!—well—a thousand years ago," answered the duke.

"A thousand years ago!" exclaimed Miss Rowrer, amused by these stories of fairy duchesses and poor mountaineers sitting by the sea and watching from father to son for Morgana. "But who has foretold her return?" she asked.

"An old sorceress who lives like an owl in the hollow of a rock."

"Really!"

"Truly and really! People come to consult her from every quarter. She makes her fire on three red stones, observes the sky and the stars, traces serpents on the sand—and then this old woman foretells the future. Now, according to her prediction, the cycle of time has swung round and Morgana is coming, bringing in her arms the fortune of Morgania. Events, we must acknowledge, seem to bear out the sorceress: the country is deeply troubled; I shall soon be obliged to go back myself—and you can imagine whether it is amusing for me! Oh, I wish I were a simple citizen of Paris!"

"*Eh bien, monseigneur!*" said Miss Rowrer, "in that

case, abdicate, abdicate. But first tell me, I beg of you, the legend of Morgana."

"It does not date from yesterday, as I have told you," the duke went on. "The duchy was already in existence, having been given to Hugh, chief of the Franks, by the Emperor Theodosius; but it was only in Morgana's time that it came to a consciousness of itself. Morgana was a poor sailor-girl, according to some—a king's daughter, according to others. Did she ever really exist? or is she only an ideal figure created by a people in infancy, more inclined to poetry than to reflection, and personifying in her all its great heroines?

"However that may be, the year, as your Edgar Poe says, 'had been a year of terrors.' There was fighting along the frontiers. The duke, selfish-hearted and weak, had lost two of his provinces. The people were in despair. Morgana brought hope back to them. Her piety and her beauty worked miracles. A light, it is said, followed her. She took up arms for her country and worked wonders. The hordes of the enemy thought her invulnerable—they had set a price on her head. One day, in battle, she saved Duke Adhemar, when he was at the point of being massacred; she leaped forward, with the great white-cross standard in one hand and her battle-ax in the other, slashed her way through the barbarians, and, her arms red with blood, brought back the duke amid the acclamations of the people. Their enthusiasm was immense; they prayed at Morgana's feet. 'What passed afterward?' Had the duke promised marriage to her, as some pretend—and, to obtain peace, did he sell Morgana to the enemy? Our chronicles are uncertain

on that point. But Duke Adhemar compromised himself by some ugly deed or other—the perjury of a coward. One evening the indignant Morgana came down to the shore, followed by a whole people, who demanded her for their duchess and scattered flowers before her. But she entered her bark alone. ‘Since the duke has sworn,’ she said, ‘let me save his honor. I go. May my sacrifice redeem his race! And remember—not gold, but youth and courage are a people’s strength!’ Then Morgana sailed away from the shore and disappeared in the open sea, while the crowd still prayed for her. The next day a strange mirage lighted up the country, and the people said: ‘It is the soul of Morgana, virgin and martyr.’ Then the people, in their indignation, drove Duke Adhemar from the throne. They raised altars to her. To Morgana was given the title of duchess; she became the protectress of Morgania—and of my house, whose honor she had saved.”

“Let us hope she will come back,” said Miss Rowrer. “You are quite right to believe in her!”

“I—” began the duke.

“Why, yes, monseigneur,” continued Miss Rowrer, who had remarked the duke’s accent of conviction toward the end of his story. “Don’t deny it—it is beautiful to believe in something! M. Caracal will pardon you this time.”

“Willingly, Miss Rowrer,” said Caracal, with the pinching of the lips which was his mode of smiling. “Willingly; but on one condition. Get Monsieur Phil to show you his works.”

“Here they are, it seems to me,” Ethel said,

pointing to the paintings and sketches which filled the studio.

"No doubt," Caracal insisted; "but—all his handiwork is not here. Come, Monsieur Phil, show us the work which is really yours—what you paint with your soul! Don't be so modest; bring the light from beneath the bushel!"

"Yes; show us, Phil," said the duke.

"Monseigneur—" Phil began.

Caracal shot a triumphant glance at Phil.

"You will allow me, *cher ami*?"—and he opened the little gallery to Miss Rowrer and the duke, while Helia, seated in the shadow, waited impatiently for the visitors to leave.

Gay laughter was heard. Miss Ethel and the duke came back. "Ah, charming! Could n't be more amusing," said the duke. "A regular art-trap! I must get one myself, to catch fools."

All left the studio except Phil, and Helia, who was to pose for him. They were already on the stairs, and Caracal, exasperated, went with them, like the legendary devil who disappears into the earth, carrying with him, instead of a soul, his cow painting under his arm. Behind him, in place of the classical odor of brimstone, there was only the fragrance of the Parma violets which Miss Rowrer let fall by accident as she went away.

The noise ceased on the staircase—Phil was already seated on the sofa beside Helia.

CHAPTER III

REMEMBERING THE GOLDEN DAYS

THEY looked at each other as if astonished to be once again together. Helia admired Phil, whom she found handsomer and stronger—more, indeed, of a man. Phil scanned the refined features of Helia; she seemed even more beautiful than in the old days.

Seated thus, hand in hand, eyes gazing into eyes, everything came back to memory: their first meeting in the little provincial town where Phil was studying, and where the circus in which Helia appeared had been set up; their simple, childish love, the pretty romance of their youth.

In the old days Phil used to speak to her with the familiar "thou"; here, in the quiet of the studio, alone with this beautiful young girl, it seemed too familiar, almost wanting in respect for her.

"Perhaps Phil is more intimidated than myself," Helia thought in her surprise. "He has not even kissed me. But whether he speaks to me with a 'thou' or a 'you' matters little, provided he loves me still!"

"Now, then, Phil," she asked, between her smiles, "what hast thou—what have you been doing all this time?"

"Oh!" answered Phil, "many things! And you, Helia?"

"Oh, for me it has been always the same thing, always just as it was before—do you remember?"

Ah, the childish doings of other days! How happy Helia was to take shelter in their sweet memories!

"Do you remember," said Phil, "the day I saw you first? You know it was at the Fête-Dieu procession. How pretty you were as the little Saint John!"

On that day houses are decorated; the walls are hung with white sheets, on which are pinned flowers and greenery, and the procession passes between these blossoming walls. But the one thing in the procession for Phil had been the little Saint John.

It was Helia who took the rôle. At first they had chosen the daughter of a rich merchant; but fear of drafts and a possible fall of rain—a cold is caught so quickly—led them to change at the last moment; and in haste they took a creature of less importance, whose colds did not count.

"I remember," said Helia, "they came to get me at the circus. I happened to be in a pink *maillot*, and they put the sheepskin on my back and the wooden cross in my hand—and ten francs in papa's hand—and so I became the little Saint John."

"And what a delightful Saint John you were!" said Phil. "I became a lover and a poet on the spot; I wrote verses—I was wild!"

"And you got wilder still," said Helia, "when you found out that, instead of a merchant's daughter, I was the famous Helia—the acrobatic star whom the posters pictured on her trapeze, amid stars and suns!"



“The Little Saint John”

Helia, in her turn, had seen Phil a few days later, while she was playing Wolf and Sheep. Sinking back in the sofa-cushions of the great studio, she chatted with Phil of that momentous event.

“That was the day after they had thrown so many oranges to me—do you remember, Phil?—and I was playing Wolf in the square with the neighbors’ children. You remember the game? One of the players is the wolf, another is the shepherd, the others are the sheep. They stand behind the shepherd and walk around singing:

‘Promenons-nous dans les bois
Pendant que le loup n’y est pas!’

(‘Let’s go walking through the woods,
While the wolf’s away!’)

And then the wolf jumps out and tries to catch a sheep.”

That second meeting of Phil and Helia had passed off very prettily. Helia was a regular little tomboy at play. Of course she did not often get a chance to play, and she found it pleasant to leap and laugh with other children; and Phil was there, standing around with the boys. He would have given everything in the world to be wolf and seize Helia and devour her with kisses—if he had dared.

And perhaps he might have dared,—lured on by a smile from the little Saint John,—but some one (it was Cemetery, the clown) came out from the circus-tent, and at sight of him sheep and shepherd scattered. He called

harshly to Helia, and with a gesture sent her into the tent.

The little girl obeyed without a word, raising her elbow as she passed before her master, as if to ward off a blow. The last thing seen by Phil was the appealing glance of Helia, which seemed to say to him, "You see—and yet I was doing no harm—and we'd have had such fun!"

That was their second meeting.

The next day Phil prowled around the circus-tent with the other boys and tried to catch a glimpse of Helia through the holes of the canvas, or from beneath, stretched out flat on the ground.

All the day long the little girl was kept rehearsing her exercises. Sometimes it was the trapeze, or again the carpet. Cemetery gave her his directions with a serious air.

"*Allez!*—firm on your feet—smile, smile—throw your head back—don't move your feet! Bend back! bend! bend! Fall on your hands! There—there—smile! *Tonnerre!* Won't you smile?"

But Phil waited in vain; he never saw her play again with the others.

Soon afterward the circus went away, and Phil, when vacation-time came, returned to America. He took with him tender remembrances, seeing often the last touching glance of Helia with her beautiful sad eyes. Pity mingled with his tenderness.

Phil went on his way through Paris and London and across the ocean to New York, and then on to the sunny South and his old ancestral mansion on the Chesapeake. But nothing, neither terrapin-catching nor duck-shooting



Helia and her "Professor"



nor horseback-riding through the country, could efface his childhood's first love, which only grew in solitude. How he regretted that he had not taken part in the game when the little Helia invited him with a smile—that he had not kissed her through her brown curls!

Phil came back to France to go on with his studies. Helia was already a grown girl when he saw her again. The circus was being advertised, and great posters with the name of Helia placarded the walls.

With what impatience Phil awaited her! He was to see her again. He passed hours in the open square where the circus was being set up in the disorder of wagons and poles and canvas, peering anxiously into the circus-wagons.

The circus was in a single tent. The artistes for changing their costumes had rude dressing-rooms amid the confusion of circus properties underneath the benches on which the public sat.

One evening Helia had finished dressing by the light of a candle when she heard a noise above her head. She saw the bunting beneath the benches lifted, and a little bunch of flowers fell on her shoulder. She nearly cried out with surprise. During her turn they often threw oranges and flowers to her—that was commonplace; but these flowers!

As soon as she came into the ring she looked at the benches above her dressing-room. She fancied she recognized there the one whom she had seen when she was playing Wolf—how long ago!

*"Le Roy fait battre le tambour
Pour appeler ses dames."*

(Phil took his banjo from the wall behind the sofa. In a low voice he murmured the old song, which he had not forgotten, to the air played by the band when it announced Helia's entrance into the ring:

"Le Roy fait battre le tambour
Pour appeler ses dames, . . .
Et la première qu'il a vue
Lui a ravi son âme."

("The King has the drum beat
To call out his ladies, . . .
And the first one he sees
Steals away his soul.")

All the memories of the past rose up in Helia at the familiar air.)

At that time she was living inside a courtyard where the circus people put up their wagons. There was a stable for the horses and an inn for the men. Through the great gate of the courtyard the circus was in full sight, out in the public square.

One evening it was raining. Helia was at the gate and, caught by the rain, hesitated to go on. All at once Phil came up. She recognized him, and both were so moved that they said only the simplest things to each other.

"Thanks for your bouquet," said Helia.

"Mademoiselle," Phil began.

"I remember you very well," Helia went on; "I knew you a long time ago. Why did you not play Wolf with us?"

"Because that man made you go in," Phil answered.

"Ah, yes! true," said Helia.

Phil feared she would hear the beating of his heart. He tried to put an end to their embarrassment, so he chattered about the rain and the bad weather.

"Mademoiselle, you must forgive me—I have no umbrella!" he said.

"That's no matter," said Helia. "Accompany me to the circus. Wait a bit—here's what we want!"

On the wall beside them there hung a circus-poster. She took it, lifted it with one hand above her head, while Phil held the other end; and the two under one shelter crossed the square.

"Shall I see you again, mademoiselle?" Phil asked, when they had reached the circus.

"Surely—in the courtyard yonder by the wagons—or here in the evening."

Phil left her without speaking further. Soon, through the canvas, he heard the air that announced her turn:

*"Marquis, t'es bien plus heureux que moi
D'avoir femme si belle;
Si tu voulais me l'accorder
Je me chargerai d'elle!"*

*("Marquis, you're happier than I
Because your wife's so pretty;
If you'll give her up to me,
Willingly 'll take her!")*

The days that followed were for Helia the sunny corner of her sad childhood. When she saw Phil she was happy—and she saw him every day! The very difficulty of meeting added charm to the adventure.

They saw each other in the courtyard of the inn.

Helia had the care of many things. A baby—Sœurette (Little Sister), held on to her skirts, and Helia gave a mother's care to the child. She busied herself also with the linen drying on the clothes-lines; she scattered grain before the chickens which were tied by their legs; she sewed at her bodices or at her little performance-slippers; or else she would be coming back from market with a great loaf of bread under her arm and provisions in her basket. Always she was charming. Her least movement was full of grace.

When Phil could not speak with Helia he would press her hand as he passed. Then he would watch her from afar. Unconsciously they fell greatly in love with each other—he because he found her so pathetic, she because he was so timid and so handsome. From a few words picked up here and there, and from a talk with the clown at a café, Phil had come to know something of Helia's story—for she never spoke of it herself, through pride. Or was it a woman's shame in her desire to show to the one she loved only what was fair? Yet she had nothing to conceal,—pretty, sweet, valiant Helia!

Her story?

Helia was her circus name. Her real name Phil did not learn. She was not the daughter of Cemetery the clown, although she called herself so; she was only his trained pupil.

Her father was a gentleman of Arles who became a widower with two daughters on his hands,—Helia and Sœurette,—one much older than the other. He fell in love with a circus-rider, and a terrible life began for

him, with tours across Europe, and marriage with the woman, who ruled him with a rod of iron. The little daughters went with him, for he had no family other than relatives far removed. Then ruin came. A circus whose director and backer he had become, and into which he had put all his money, failed. He died, abandoned by every one, and leaving his two little girls to the care of Cemetery, who had been his circus-manager. Cemetery, harsh and honest, adopted the children and determined to make artistes of them. He at once began the training of the elder, and Helia grew up under him for master. "You shall do it or die!" Cemetery used to say when teaching her to perform. To those who represented to him that the profession was already encumbered, he answered: "There is always room on top! Beauty is well—talent is better. To work!"

Such was the story of Helia.

When Phil asked her about it, Helia did not answer, but only smiled faintly.

But Phil knew that she was unhappy, and his love for her went on growing. He dreamed a thousand chivalrous schemes—each madder than the one before. He felt within him the passion and daring resolution of the Longuevilles, his ancestors. He had also inherited their zeal for virtue. He would tear Helia away from her rough life. He would educate her—he would make her fit to be his companion. He explained his ideas to Helia. At first they amused her, but when she saw how sincere he was, she ended by believing them.

Helia went out rarely—scarcely more than from the inn to the circus. She would have liked to meet Phil

oftener. When evening came, in her dressing-room under the benches, she donned her costume quickly and received her friend. It was easy for him to enter without being remarked. On the outside there were wagons which left only a narrow passage. It was where the canvas of the circus-tent joined; he had only to pull it aside to enter. Then he was at once in the dressing-room inclosed by boards and fragments of carpets worn out by generations of tumblers.

Phil would sit on a trunk while Helia combed her beautiful hair in front of a broken mirror. It never came to their minds that there could be anything wrong in what they were doing. They had long talks. Helia spoke of her profession and described her exercises.

"I am going to do the high leap. I spring and catch the bar—I get my balance, standing on my hands—and then I go off with a somersault! The high leap, Phil, you could learn in a month—you who are afraid of nothing!"

Phil would listen, and then interrupt her gently and speak of all sorts of things, opening new horizons before her; and Helia was happy and glad to learn.

"What beautiful arms!" said Phil one evening, as she was soaping them in a basin of cold water.

"And I take care of them!" answered Helia, "*songe donc*, Phil! (They were already using the familiar French "thou" to each other.) Just think; every evening I owe my life to these arms! When I do the flying trapeze they must n't miss their hold. I should be crushed on the benches,—think of it!—and I have to smile all the same."



Phil courting Helia in the Yard



As she dried her arms, Phil raised his eyes and saw, near the shoulder, a brown stain on the white skin.

"That 's nothing," said Helia; "I knocked against a post."

Phil looked at her closely.

"You 've been crying again to-day! But I—I 'm not afraid of Cemetery," he went on. "I 'll go for him to-morrow and punch his face. I won't have him touching you any more. First of all, he has n't the right! and I 'll forbid him."

But Helia shook her head: "No!" She added: "I 'll attend to that! I belong to you now—not to him! There he comes," she said suddenly. "Go away—and not a word, whatever happens!"

Above the noise of the band and of the public, Helia had heard Cemetery's voice. Phil had just time to get away.

"Are you going to come when you are called?" the man said.

At a glance, from Helia's emotion, from certain noises he had heard, he guessed the truth. But he was far from thinking of Phil. He suspected that some circus man was paying court to her.

Phil, from the outside, heard this dialogue.

"You were not alone?"

"No!"

"There was a man here?"

Helia did not answer.

"Wait a bit," said Cemetery. "I 'll teach you—"

"Don't touch me—I forbid you!"

Phil looked through a rent in the canvas.

Helia stood transfigured, superb with energy. She was no longer a child driven by cuffs and blows; she was the young woman awakened by love, conscious of her rights and her duties. Phil's soul was in her. Helia spoke in a low tone, and her attitude was so calm that the man stopped in amazement.

"*Hein!* what is it?" he stammered.

"Leave this room!" said Helia, "or I will have the police arrest you. You have no right over me! From to-day you shall keep your hands off me! Leave the room," she repeated.

As if her gesture had the power of a charm, the man went out, dumb with surprise and raising his elbow as if to protect himself.

Phil was filled with enthusiasm at the sight of Helia's self-deliverance. His counsels had fallen on good ground. He had awakened in Helia a spirit of independence, and this made him feel an increase of responsibility.

At midnight, while the artistes were supping at the inn, Phil saw Helia in the shadow of the wagons. It was there that he met her henceforth, for after this he went no more to the dressing-room. Their conversations took place in the peace of night; they said a thousand things to each other, talking, like children, of whatever passed through their heads, drifting with the current which bore both onward.

"I don't like the career they have chosen for me," said Phil! "they want me to be a diplomat. Later on I wish to be an artist—a painter or sculptor; a painter, I think. My guardian will never be willing. But never

mind! I will go to Paris—I will make my way by myself!”

“Who knows if I shall ever see you again!” said Helia. “What will become of me?”

“Helia, you shall come to me as soon as I have earned money.”

“Paris,” said Helia, dreamily. “You will be all alone there when you arrive. Ah! if I only knew some one! At any rate, I will give you the address of a hotel for artistes where I have been myself with Cemetery, and a letter for Suzanne, whom I knew at school. Suzanne is an actress. We write to each other sometimes.”

Ah, what adieus were theirs the evening before the separation! How Helia trembled when Phil kissed her—and what promises he made her!

Sinking back in the sofa-cushions, Helia and Phil stared vaguely before them at the Morgana picture. The perfume of Miss Rowrer’s violets reached them, light and subtle; and the minutes passed in silence. Then Phil sang in an undertone:

“Adieu, ma mie, adieu, mon cœur,
Adieu, mon espérance! . . .
Puisque il me faut servir le roi,
Séparons-nous d’ensemble.”

(“Farewell, my love, farewell, my heart,
Farewell, all my hope! . . .
And since I must serve my king,
We must separate from each other!”)

He put aside the banjo and began talking with Helia, asking questions about her present life.

"How long have you been in Paris, Helia? A short time only?"

Helia, who was astonished, was on the point of replying: "Why, I wrote you." She remained silent, however. The sumptuous studio—the visits of monseigneurs and beautiful young ladies—how different it was from the Phil of other days, the Phil of the circus, the student who had been devoted to her later on in Paris! Why not a word of their life then, of their idyl of the Louvre roof-garden? etc. . . . He did not even speak of all that; his remembrance seemed to be at an end. This, then, was all he found to say to her after more than a year of separation—he who could not live without her, who had said it a hundred times.

"Where are you living?" asked Phil. "At the Hôtel des Artistes, where I went when I came to Paris! I left it on the advice of Suzanne, your great actress," Phil went on, smilingly.

"Ah, Phil! I thought her a great actress," said Helia. "She was the only person I knew in Paris. Oh, if I could have been more useful to you, I would have been! No," she began again, quickly, "I am not living there; but I keep Cemetery there."

"Cemetery!" replied Phil.

"The poor fellow has grown old—he is out of work; I pay for his room until he can find an engagement."

"What, Cemetery, that brute?"

"He made me an artiste!" Helia replied, bravely.

"And your little sister?" continued Phil,—"*Sœurette*, you called her—what has become of her? Do you keep her with you?"

"Yes," said Helia. "My father's family claimed her, but it was a little late, was it not? I have kept her, thanks to several friends—M. Socrate, the poet, among the rest."

"Socrate!" said Phil. "I know a person of that name. It can't be the same—mine is a painter."

"So is mine."

"He is a sculptor also," added Phil.

"It must be the same man," said Helia.

"Impossible!" thought Phil. "Socrate a friend of Helia! How can they have met?"

Phil thought of the life of Helia in circuses and music-halls—the coarse environment where art touches elbows with shamelessness. "What influences have been around her," he thought in sadness, "during all this time in which I have not seen her?"

"Socrate does many kind little things for me," Helia went on. "He posts my letters and makes himself useful. He 's a man who will be celebrated some day; oh, you will see!"

So spoke Helia, in the spirit of loyalty. In reality she cared little enough for Socrate; but it pleased her to let Phil think that she cared for him. So much the worse if Phil should be vexed! Had *he* been afraid to give pain? Since she has been in the studio he has not once kissed her!

Helia rose to go away.

"Then it 's for to-morrow, Phil?"

Phil begged her to stay.

"No; I will come back," said Helia, " and we 'll pose to-morrow. I have so many things to do to-day—my

costumer, my director, a new apparatus to try—I must hurry.”

“Phil has forgotten me,” said Helia to herself. “It had to come—I am nothing to him now!”

As she passed out of the door she was aware of the perfume of the violets which Miss Rowrer had let fall.

CHAPTER IV

WHEN PHIL CAME TO PARIS

AS Helia felt, Phil was, indeed, no longer the same. This was no more the Phil who had loved her in the old days.

When the Phil who did not go into "society," and knew neither duke nor Miss Rowrer,—when that Phil came to Paris, after parting from Helia in the courtyard near the circus, he hastened to the Hôtel des Artistes, of which Helia had told him, treasuring in his pocket her letter that recommended him to Suzanne. Evening was falling, the street was dark, the house somber. *Maillots* were drying at windows. An invisible musical clown was picking out on his bottles lugubrious tunes. But Phil thought of Helia, and was gay.

That night he slept little. He was in a hurry for the morning, in order that he might carry Helia's letter to Mlle. Suzanne. He flung his window wide, and heard Paris murmuring in the dark.

"Your name and profession," said the landlady next morning, as he came down. Phil signed the register, writing underneath:

"Artist-painter."

"Artist-painter," said the landlady. "I should have liked that trade."

"It's not a bad one," Phil said.

"But very difficult," replied the landlady. "We lately had a painter here—a very famous one; he painted with his feet. He used to tell me the hardest thing about it is to balance yourself on your hands while you are painting! Ah, monsieur, the public no longer appreciates the fine arts. If I were you, at your age, I'd learn to walk on a ball."

"I'll tell that to Mlle. Suzanne," Phil said to himself. "She must be a real artiste—Mlle. Suzanne. And then we'll talk about Helia!"

He thought he should never get to Mlle. Suzanne, the city was so enormous. He was meditating what he should say to her, when, all of a sudden, the cab began jolting over an atrocious stretch of pavement. Phil stuck his head through the window just as the cab drew up at the end of a blind alley.

"Say, *cocher*," said Phil, "I think you've made a mistake."

"*Penses-tu, bébé!*" murmured the cabman.

"What do you say?"

"I say it's all right."

Phil got out. There were heads at all the windows; the cab had made a stir in the little street.

"Perhaps she saw me come," thought Phil, as he went into the house.

It was the right address, but Mlle. Suzanne was not at home.

"You'll find Mlle. Suzanne in the Boulevard de Vau-



(A.)

Phil arrives at the Hotel



girard, Number 13 *bis*. You go this way, turn to the right, then to the left; there's a door with plaster in front of it. Then ask for Mlle. Suzanne."

Phil paid the cabman and set off on foot. He walked to the right, then to the left, and found himself in the Boulevard de Vaugirard, at that time of day deserted. Turning again to the left, he saw a heap of plaster with a door behind it. Phil knocked timidly.

"*Entrez!*" cried a voice of thunder.

Phil had just time to pull down his cuffs. There was no time to push up his cravat. "Come in!"—said in such a tone allowed of no delay.

He entered. It was an astonishing place, heaped up with mud, a chaos of clay and plaster. There were buckets filled with dirty water, sprinklers, hammers, pieces of old iron.

"Where am I?" thought Phil. "This must be a school for sculpture done with the feet! Have I made a mistake?"

"Why don't you come in?" roared the voice. "This side! Don't upset my statue! Look out for my 'Fraternity'! *Troun de Diou!* don't tread on my potatoes!"

Phil passed over all obstacles and came into the presence of the giant of the place. He was a short, thick-set creature, whose gaping shirt showed a breast as hairy as a monkey's back. With his fingers he was kneading clay, and he raised furious eyes to Phil. Behind him a little monsieur lay stretched on a lounge, playing with his monocle; but where was Suzanne?

"Monsieur—excuse me! I have made a mistake!" Phil stammered.

"No harm done!" said the hairy one, mollified by Phil's correct dress and high standing collar; and he added: "At your service, monsieur!"

Phil showed his letter. "I thought I should find here Mlle. Suzanne, an actress," he said.

"Suzanne! It's me!" cried a gay voice from the ceiling.

Phil looked up in the air. A charming blonde with bare arms and feet, in a white waist and black petticoat, was seated on top of a scaffolding, looking at Phil with laughing eyes.

"Mlle. Suzanne, my model!" said the man.

"Let's have the letter!" Suzanne cried.

"Catch!" said the sculptor, tossing up to her the envelop weighted with a piece of clay.

"Well, I'm going!" said the little monsieur with the monocle.

"Wait! don't go!" Suzanne cried, with her letter in her hand. "Let's be correct. Messieurs, I present to you Monsieur Phil, a young Englishman—"

"American," rectified Phil.

"A friend of one of my friends—the famous Helia—it's too long to explain. M. Caracal, who writes in the—the—what-do-you-call-it—well, no matter—And Poufaille, sculptor, pupil of Boudin. There, the introductions are made!"

"Monsieur—"

"Monsieur—"

"Monsieur—"

There were three bows.

"Ah! so you are an American and a painter," Caracal

said to Phil. "*Tiens! tiens! tiens!* I thought there were only pork-packers in that country. *Salut, mes-sieurs!*"

Before Phil could answer a word, Caracal had straddled over the rough model of "Fraternity," jumped across the potatoes, and gone out, slamming the door behind him.

"He's not polite—M. Caracal," Suzanne remarked; "but you English don't care!"

"I am an American!"

"Well, then, M. l'Américain, what are you waiting for? Give me your hand and help me down!"

But she was on the ground before Phil could assist her.

"Oh, my good Helia!" said Suzanne. "How glad I am she is so happy!"

"The friends of our friends are *our* friends," bawled Poufaille, as he patted Phil on the shoulder with his great hairy hand. "Sit down, Monsieur Phil."

Phil sat down, much encouraged by their welcome.

Suzanne went and came lightly, moving things about. She took a cigarette, lighted it, and threw it away. He saw her approach the stove and raise the cover of the pot. A bubbling noise came from it.

"Make yourself at home," said Poufaille. Phil profited by the permission to look around him. A hunk of bread was lying on the model's table. In an empty plate a fork fraternized with a pipe. The shelves on the wall were encumbered with rude canvases and rough models. The sculptor was smoothing down his clay. The scene did not attract the young American.

"Mademoiselle," he said, preparing to retire, "I will pay you a visit at the Impasse de Vaugirard."

"So as not to find me? You 'll be taking something for your cold, sure!"

"But, mademoiselle, I—I have n't a cold!"

There was an explosion of laughter. Suzanne choked and Poufaille bellowed with joy.

"Ah ça," Suzanne cackled. "*Hou! hou!* but—*hou, hou!* Helia taught you nothing, then?"

Phil stood amazed, with his hat in his hand.

"He's nice, all the same, *l'Angliche*—we can't let him go away alone—something would happen to him!" said Suzanne. "Put down your hat," she added, "and lunch with us!"

"Of course, of course!" shouted Poufaille.

"Now be polite, Monsieur Phil," Suzanne went on: "sit there and act as if you were in society. Help me peel my potatoes!"

"Certainly!" Phil answered.

And so it was that Phil, seated on a block of plaster, was initiated by Suzanne into the *belles manières Parisiennes*.

"You must take off only the skins of the potatoes, like this!" she said, while posting him in the picturesque slang of the quarter.

"And to take something for your cold when you have n't a cold?" Phil asked.

"That means to be caught," Suzanne answered. "*Dame!* in Paris wit runs the streets!"

"Then this morning," said Phil, "this morning when a lady advised me to give up art and learn to walk on a ball—it was to take something for my cold, was it?"



"Hammering the clay with a terrific blow of his fist"



"For sure!" replied Suzanne.

A noise started them. It was Poufaille working himself up to a fit of anger. "*Troun de Diou!* She was right, that lady of yours!" he cried, hammering the clay with a terrific blow of his fist.

"Hello!" Phil said in a fright; "is he going crazy?"

The sculptor's eyes were out of his head. With formidable blows he was flattening the bust, shouting *rinforzando*: "Right a hundred times over—a thousand times, a million times!"

"What's the matter, M. Poufaille?" asked Phil, rising.

"What's the matter? To think that those pigs of the jury refused my statue of 'Fraternity' for the Salon! You understand my indignation," said Poufaille, taking Phil by the lapel of his coat. "Do you understand? *Hein!* do you understand?"

"I—I—I—understand your indignation—I—I share it," Phil answered between the shakes.

"It's enough to set one crazy!" shouted Poufaille; "but—*sacré mille tonnerres!*—Phil, take off your collar; the sight of you with that instrument of torture chokes me!"

"Well, if that's all that's needed to calm you!" Phil answered, and with a turn of the hand he pulled off cravat and collar.

"*À la bonne heure!* I breathe!" said Poufaille.

"*Mon petit* Poufaille, where's the salt?" Suzanne asked, without paying the slightest heed to the sculptor's rage.

"There," answered Poufaille, "in the tobacco-jar."

"And now, to dinner!" Suzanne called. "Here's pig's rump ragout!"

"To dinner!" shouted Poufaille.

"To dinner!" repeated Phil.

During the meal Phil, who had had a French lesson from Suzanne, tried to give her a lesson in geography. He spoke of America. But Suzanne declared that all those names hurt her head. And besides, she didn't believe a word of it.

"Let's talk of love instead," she said. "Are you greatly in love with my friend Helia?"

Phil blushed.

"She is so pretty," Suzanne continued; "and she's not been spoiled, I can tell you! All the more merit in her to be good—she's worth more than all of us together!—not to speak of her being pretty—pretty! That doesn't hurt anything, does it, Monsieur Phil?"

Phil smiled.

"Oh, if I were a man!" Suzanne declared, enthusiastically, "I'd make a fool of myself for Helia! Tell me all about her," she went on. "Love-stories are so amusing!"

Phil told about the little Saint John, the lamb, the game of Wolf, the poster-umbrella, the dressing-room under the benches, and his last interview with Helia, when she had given him the address of the Hôtel des Artistes and his letter of introduction.

Suzanne drank in his words, turn by turn moved to tenderness or laughter.

"Oh, it does me good to hear it! There's love for

you!" she cried, putting her hand to her heart with a gesture of the stage.

"I see that you are an actress," Phil observed.

"An actress? I? *Penses-tu, bébé?* I appeared once in a *cabaret artistique*—it disgusted me with the theater for the rest of my life!"

"You forget that you play the Muse at our reunion," Poufaille interrupted.

"Oh, yes! the Muse," Suzanne replied. "You see, Phil, since they bore themselves to death in Paris, those from each province meet together and give balls and receptions and lectures and what not; and they give dinners, too—and sing to the sound of the hurdy-gurdy."

"I 'm the hurdy-gurdy!" cried Poufaille.

"And I 'm the one that sings," added Suzanne. "I eat garlic that day and improvise in *patois*—and every one thinks I belong to his province. *Et aïe donc, et vive la joie!*"

"*Et vive la joie!*" took up Phil.

They were now a trio of friends.

"By the way, *mon cher*, where do you live?" asked Poufaille, who was already saying "thou" to him and calling him *mon cher* and *mon vieux* without knowing either his name or address. Phil told the hotel he was at.

"*Allons donc!* but that 's a quarter of the *arrivés!*" Poufaille said scornfully; "you have only bourgeois in that quarter, medal-men, members of the jury—the pigs! You 're done for if you stay there!"

"You must n't stay there a day longer!" declared Suzanne. "Come over here; we 'll present you to the *copains* [comrades]."

Hesitation was impossible.

"All right," Phil said, as he put on his collar and cravat. "I will leave to-day."

"Will you come to my house?" Suzanne asked. "No ceremony, you know! I'll bring you a mattress."

"Oh!" exclaimed Phil.

"Or else here," said Poufaille. "You can sleep in the corner beside the potatoes, *hein?* Will that do?"

"No, thanks," said Phil; "I'll see you again to-morrow! *Au revoir!*"

The same evening, having found a room, Phil left his hotel.

CHAPTER V

AN INITIATION INTO ART

THE next day Phil returned his new friends' hospitality by taking them to lunch.

"Where are we going?" Suzanne asked.

"Where you wish," answered Phil.

"To Mère Michel's, then."

Suzanne delighted in this restaurant. The food was bad, but there was laughter. Sometimes messieurs with high hats invited her to chic places. Suzanne would refuse the chic restaurants and take them to Mère Michel's, where their hats brought out thunders of applause.

Phil had a Derby hat and so received a more modest welcome. For that matter, few people were there when they arrived. Poufaille did the honors of the place.

"Do you see those two photos on the wall, Phil? That—hum!—that's mine, my two statues—'Liberty,' 'Fraternity.' Do you see this photo in the frame? *Salut!* That means a year's credit—it's from Lionsot, a Prix-de-Rome man; he paid Mère Michel with an autograph dedication at the base of his 'Light-Footed Achilles.'"

"*Cours après!*" laughed Suzanne.

Meanwhile the customers kept coming in, some with

canvases and paint-boxes, others with only their long hair and unkempt beards.

"That one 's a painter—that one a sculptor—and that a musician," said Poufaille. "The empty place, there in the corner, is the place of Socrate, a *type épatant!* Musician, sculptor, painter, and poet, and philosopher—a whole world in himself!"

"Ah!" uttered Phil, respectfully, as he looked at the empty place.

Nothing was heard for a time but the rattle of knives and forks; then there was a great deal of laughter, with cries that punctuated conversations on art. Heads were turned for a few entrances. A pretty model with a cloud of gauze for a scarf was greeted with "Kiss, kiss!" An old man with a gilt band round his cap only called forth howls.

"Eh! you old Gaul!"

"*Vieux coq!*"

"Your 'kiss, kiss,' makes me laugh," said the old man. "Do you know to-day what 'kiss, kiss,' means? Oh, yes! in the old days women fell in love—under the Empire!"

"*Ta bouche, bébé!*"

"*Ferme ça* [shut up]!"

"He is the inspector of the Louvre roofs," Poufaille said to Phil. "I am well acquainted with him. I see him every day."

Phil opened his eyes wide; everything was new to him. From his seat he had also a view of the bar along-side. While Mère Michel served in the room of the artistes, Père Michel stretched out his immense bulk behind the counter.

"That man he 's serving is the lackey of the Duke of Morgania," observed Suzanne.

"Does the Duke of Morgania live near here?" Phil interrupted. He had read the name in the newspapers.

"Almost opposite," Suzanne answered.

"Ah!" Phil said, with the same shade of respect which he had shown before the empty seat of Socrate, never dreaming that he would one day be the friend of both the *grand seigneur* and the poet-philosopher.

Just then Socrate entered. Poufaille nudged Phil with his elbow. Phil looked. He saw Socrate seat himself in his corner, call the *garçon*, order three or four dishes and a liter of wine, hurriedly, at haphazard, like a man overwhelmed with thought and with no time to lose.

"He 's begun a work on the Louvre—something tremendous!" Poufaille informed Phil.

"What is it like?" Phil asked.

"No one knows!"

Phil examined the man who seemed to be carrying the weight of a world.

His skull was nearly bald, his forehead bulging out, his hair about his ears, while his beard half hid a grimace; his eye was alert and sagacious.

"He does resemble him, though," Phil observed.

"Resembles whom?" said Poufaille.

"Socrates the ancient."

"So there was another?" Poufaille asked.

When his meal was over, Socrate arose, sad-mannered and dignified.

"He 's going over to the Café des Deux Magots," said Poufaille. "Let 's go too—you 'll see him nearer."

The Deux Magots was the rendezvous of different bands—the Band of Cherche-Midi (look out for twelve o'clock!), made up of rich Americans playing Bohemia and frequenting the Deux Magots in appropriate costume; the band of the Red-headed Goat, artists who despised art and occupied themselves with socialism; and there were others besides.

No one went to the Deux Magots for its coffee—they went there for Socrate and Caracal. There could be heard Socrate, musician, painter, and poet, speaking of high art; the new men drank in his words.

One day, in his enthusiasm, Charley, the millionaire Bohemian, proposed to take him to America to give lectures on “The Artistic Atmosphere”—by Jove!

“Are there any cafés in America?” Socrate asked.

“*Hélas, non!*”

“Then I stay where I am,” replied Socrate, the man of manly decisions; “when America has cafés I’ll go over—not before. *Arrangez-vous!*”

“You’re great, by Jove!” cried Charley.

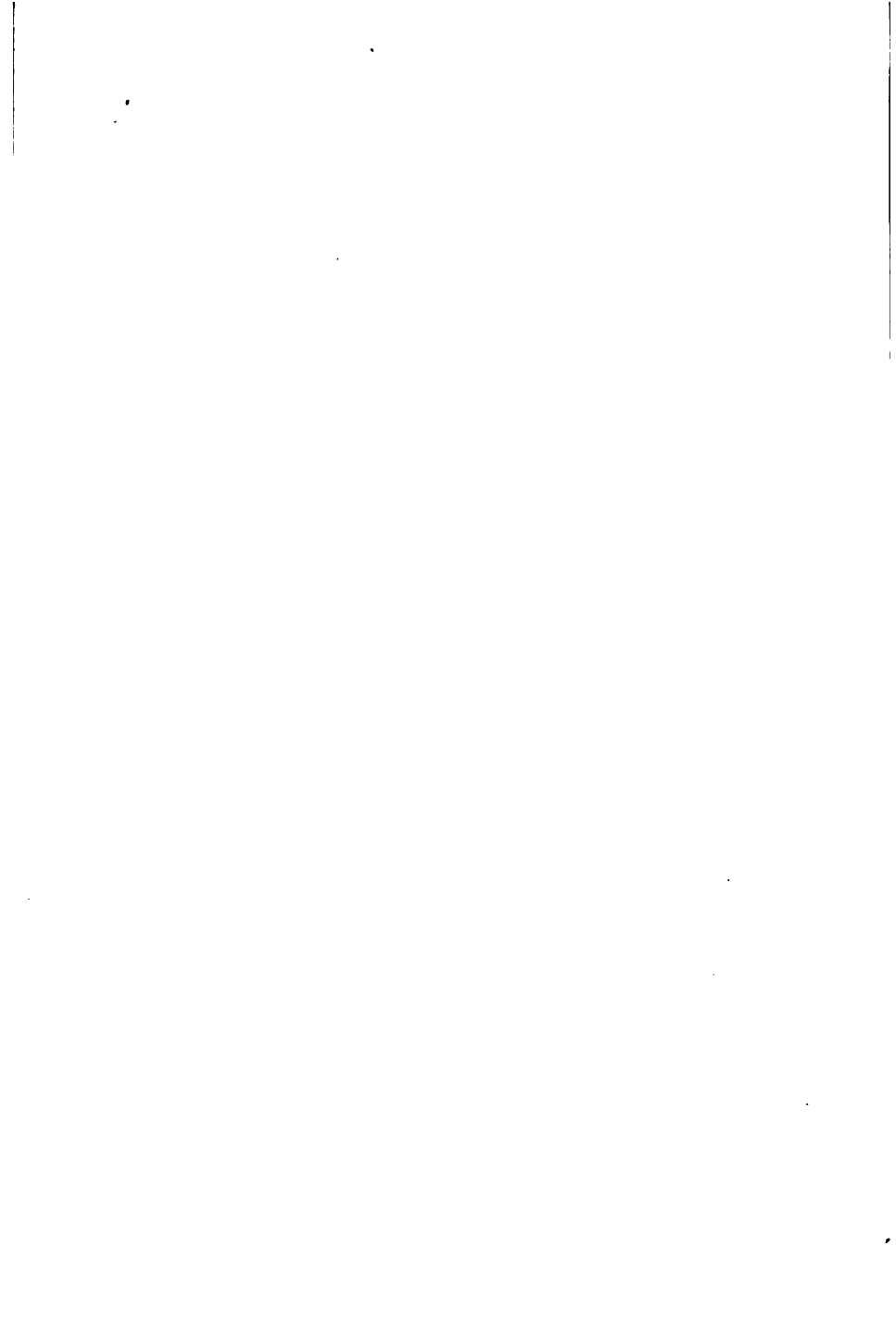
Socrate dazzled the young. He talked of everything, social questions included.

“The distribution of wealth is badly made,” he said. “You have genius and no money—and you’ll be obliged to work, to produce and to sell! To sell, do you understand? To cheapen yourself, to prostitute your genius! In society as I dream of it, the artist, freed from material bonds, would soar in serene heights.”

Socrate cited the example of Lionsot, the Prix-de-Rome man, the sculptor of “Light-footed Achilles.” “He had the Prix de Rome—he has turned out badly!



Socrate at Deux Magots



Yet there was good in him: to pay a wretched debt for food with an artistic autograph—that was noble!”

Most of them, in fact, acted like the famous Lionsot—for example, whenever Mère Michel demanded her money.

Caracal, who was not so deep but more brilliant, enjoyed a different prestige.

First of all, he lived in the Grands Quartiers, in a house with an elevator! so it was said. And while the others ate at Mère Michel's, Caracal would be supping at Montmartre—*suprême élégance!*

Besides, he wrote in the newspapers. For a little article, for one's name cited in the “Tocsin”—how low would not one stoop to obtain such a favor!

“‘Oysters and Melons,’ still life by X—,” or else “‘Old Tree-trunk,’ landscape by Z—”; and Z—and X—would march off together into immortality.

Caracal, behind his monocle, observed the different bands, in his heart deriding every one. He cross-questioned the comrades, and composed his newspaper *chroniques* on the café table.

“*Eh bien!* anything for my paper? A nice little scandal? Something strong?”

“I've got something new,” the good-natured Poufaille would say; “at my house, in the courtyard, a woman has been found dead.”

“Bravo! Young? pretty?”

“No, old.”

“And dead—how?” Caracal asked. “From drink?”

“No, of starvation. She was keeping alive the four children of a neighbor who was palsied; and she killed herself working.”

"Old and poor! but that 's not interesting; it 's only tiresome!"

And he went on with the conversation, in which music, poetry, love, sculpture, and crime made a horrible mixture.

Phil, coming up from the province, was made gloomy by all this noise. These never-ending dissertations made his head turn. It was the invasion of his brain by a world whose existence he had never suspected, of whose virtues and vices he had no idea.

When his work was over, the *copains* took walks with him through Paris and showed him such "Parisian" places as the Rue Mouffetard and the Rue Saint-Médard.

Paris proper did not count; you had to cross its whole width and go as far as Montmartre to become really Parisian. All had a single ambition—to be the painter of the wretchedly poor, and of street-women, an easy art brought into fashion by a few noisy successes. They initiated Phil to *their* Paris, to the Paris of the *fosses aux lions*, of leprous quays, of rag-pickers' alleys, where children played hide-and-seek behind heaps of refuse. When Phil wished to go and dream by the banks of the Seine, they led him to the banks of the Bièvre, stinking like a charnel-house.

"*Hein!* Don't you see it 's beautiful in color?" they said to him. Phil acknowledged, as he sniffed, that the Bièvre diffused an "artistic atmosphere."

The truth is, Phil soon had enough of such loafing. Of course, he was n't a genius like the others—nothing came to him easily. An organism like Socrate, painter-poet-philosopher, was incomprehensible to him. Such a

man, doing a colossal work on the Louvre and studying the social question in cafés, seemed great to him. As for himself, he was conscious that he had not such gifts. For him work was necessary, a great deal of work, and he set himself to it resolutely: studies at the life-class, sketches in the street, libraries, museums—he went everywhere and did a little of everything. He prepared ardently for his admission to the studio; he frequented the schools and appeared but seldom at the Deux Magots.

Socrate, isolated in pipe-smoke like a god in a cloud, condescended to take an interest in him.

“You work too much, young man! Look out! Think less of the material side and trust to inspiration. Work is good. Glory is better. Think of glory, young man!”

“*Hélas!*” Phil thought; “how can you have glory without work?”

He had it a few days later—the glory which was dear to the heart of Socrate.

It was the day of his reception to the studio. He had only to give his family name, first name, and particulars to be asked to get up on a table—“Step lively *et plus vite que ça!*”—and to see around him a howling crowd, armed with brushes and palettes, shouting: “Philidor!”

“An American speaking French—where did you come from? *En voilà un drôle de type!*”

“My—my ancestors were French,” said Phil.

“An American who has ancestors!”

“Philidor de Longueville—” stammered Phil.

“Philidor! Philidor!”

“Sing us something!”

“Take off your clothes!”

Phil began undressing.

"Step lively *et plus vite que ça!*"

Fifty savages were howling, yelling, laughing, and hissing around him.

"Enough! enough!"

"Encore! encore!"

"Paint him blue!"

"No, no!"

"Yes, yes!"

Phil was already stripped to the waist, facing the great window in full light. At his feet the confused mass of students was hushed—they stood in a circle around him. He heard their approving murmurs as they admired his thoroughbred muscles, his broad shoulders, the nervous slenderness of his waist.

"Bravo, l'Américain! There's a man who's built! You'd say he was an antique—*c'est un costeau*—he'll be a great boy! I wouldn't want him to punch me—he's a good fellow, too! Enough! enough! Dress yourself, Philidor! A *Ban* for Philidor!"

"Pan! pan! pan! pan! pan!

Pan! pan!"

Thus Phil made acquaintance with the intoxication of glory.

Profiting by the moment of silence, a grave voice arose.

"The welcome!"

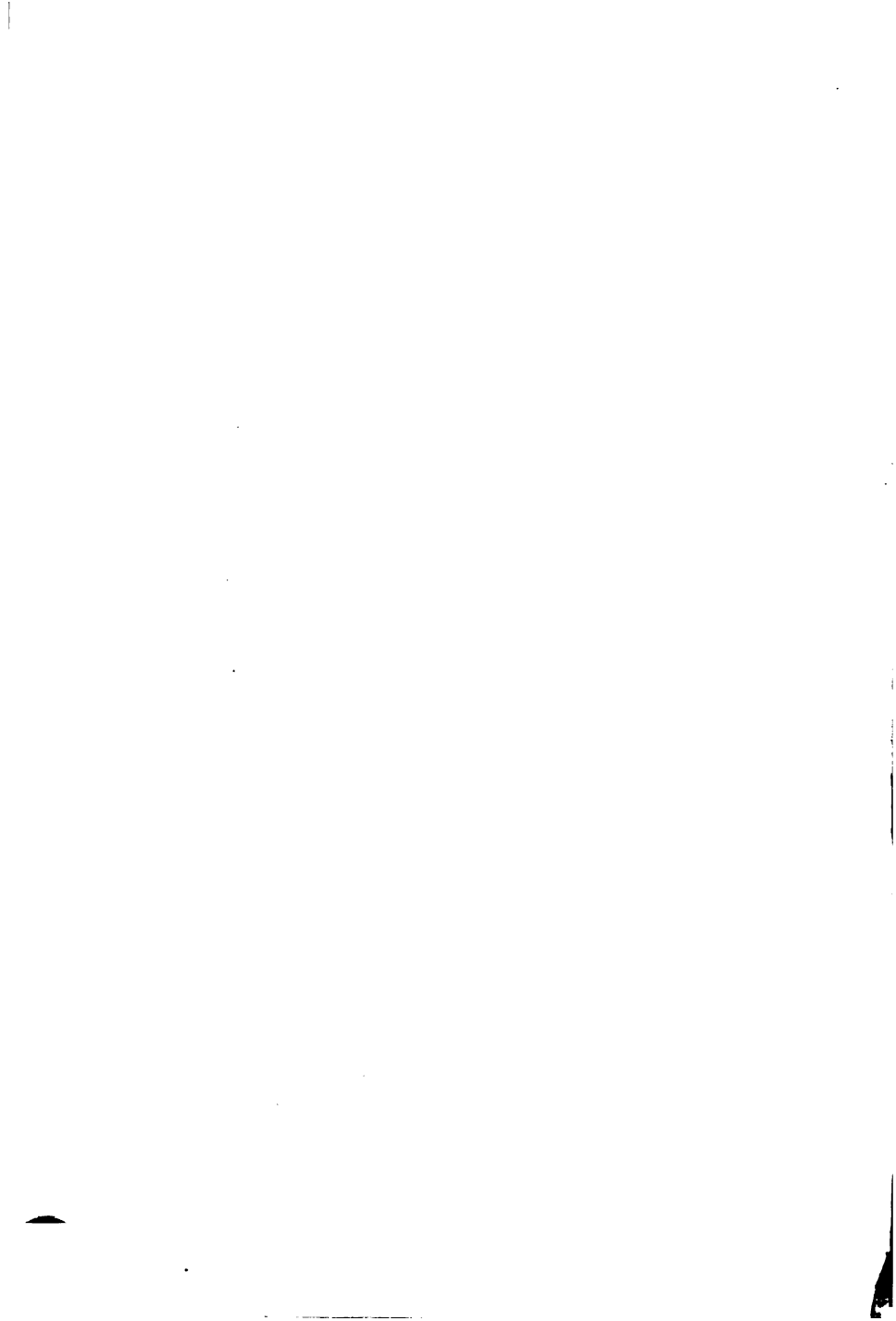
Phil, over the heads, saw amid the smoke a bearded face under a great bald forehead.

"Socrate has just come in," a pupil said to Phil.

"Socrate, an astonishing man—painter-poet!"



“ Stripped to the waist ”



"I know Socrate," Phil said with pride.

"The welcome!" Socrate repeated.

"*C'est ça!* That 's it, the welcome!" the whole hall cried.

"That means you must pay the drinks for the studio," the pupil explained. "It 's the custom here."

"Messieurs, whenever you wish," said Phil.

"At the Deux Magots and at once," Socrate insisted, like a man accustomed to prompt decisions.

Phil dressed himself, and all went out into the streets, *en route* for the Deux Magots. Socrate, the glory of the studio, leader of men, and genius—Socrate himself gave his arm to Phil.

"Say, young man," whispered Socrate, who was master of himself in any crowd, "you could n't lend me twenty francs?"

After this glorious day Phil's existence seemed flat. From his childhood he had been accustomed to free air, to liberty in great spaces; and now he had to live a cloistered life, shut up in himself, but with work, it is true, for distraction. He worked sadly and alone.

In front of his window, on the other side of the Seine, stretched the Louvre. Beyond, far away, above the smoke of Paris, the church of the Sacré-Cœur lifted its Oriental dome. To the right was the Pont Neuf with the point of the island of the Cité and Notre Dame; to the left was the greenery of the Tuileries, the Grand Palais, the Arc de Triomphe.

Now and then Suzanne came. But Suzanne was far from being Helia. Her frivolity made Phil shy, though

her babbling talk amused him. She kept Phil posted, telling him all the important news.

Poufaille, for example, was surely going to give up sculpture and become a painter—l'Institut would have to look out for itself! They had rejected his statue. "*Eh bien*, they 'll see! And then, paintings sell better!" added Suzanne.

"Does he sell his paintings?" Phil asked with astonishment. "What does he do for a living?"

"He has something to do at the Louvre, I believe," Suzanne said. But she immediately became silent and bit her lip.

"A copy, of course—ornaments for a *plafond*?" Phil asked.

"I believe so," Suzanne answered, fearing to say too much.

"There is some secret," Phil thought.

But the very day she told him all this his door opened suddenly and Poufaille entered with a furious air.

"Ah, the pigs!" he cried, shaking his fist toward the Louvre; and he threw into a corner a tool which Phil took at first for a sculptor's instrument. It was a spade.

"What's that?" asked Phil. "What's the matter?"

"That's my spade; and the matter is they are pigs!"

"Have they taken your *plafond* away from you?" Phil asked on a chance.

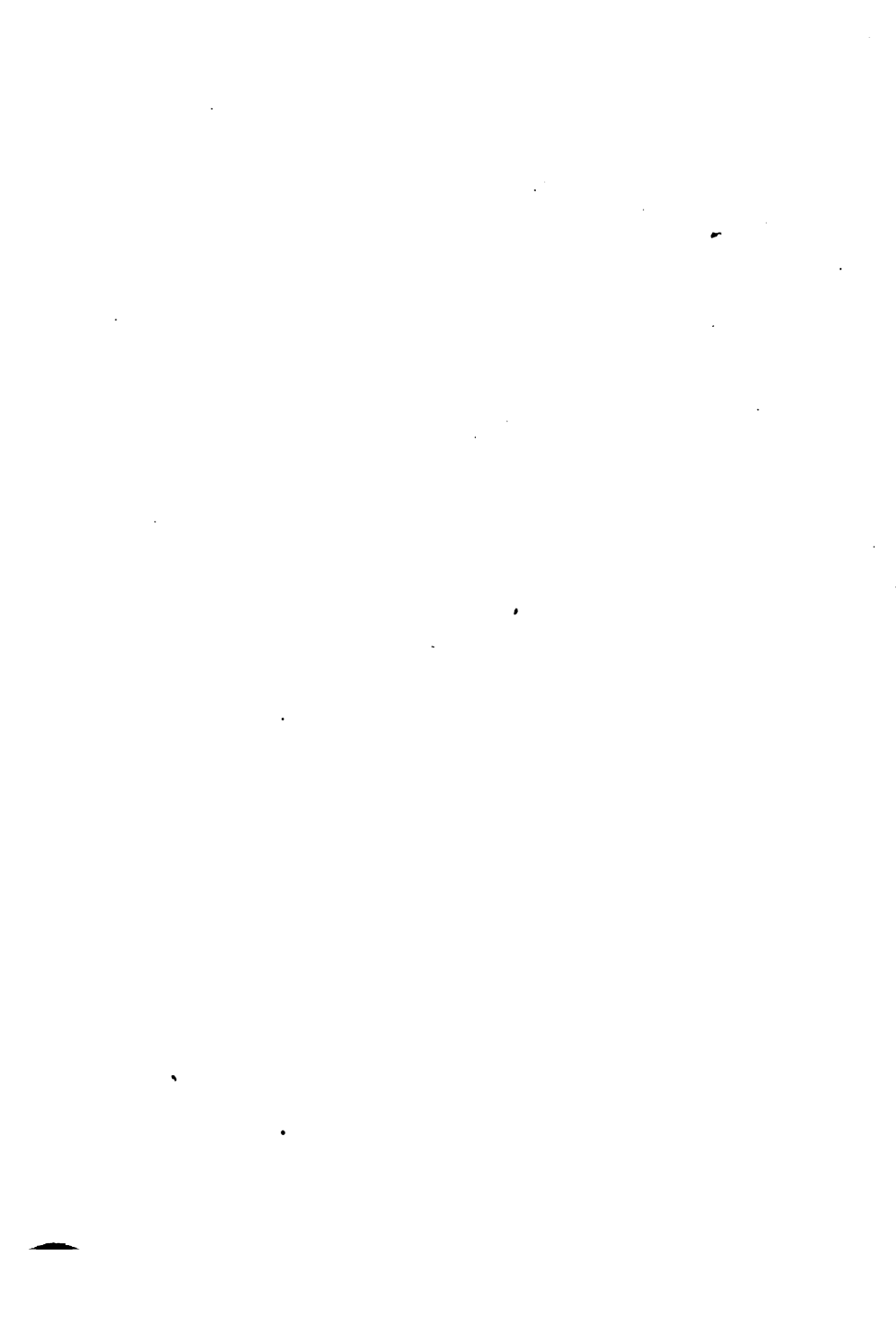
"What *plafond*?" Poufaille cried. "They're trying to keep me from cultivating my potatoes!"

"Potatoes?" exclaimed Phil.

"Phil does n't know about it," Suzanne said to Poufaille.



“‘They are pigs!’”



"*Eh bien—tant pis*—it's a secret," Poufaille cried; "but I'm going to tell it. And, besides, a secret chokes me, like your collars!"

"If it's a secret, I don't want to know it," Phil answered.

"*Si, si!* You must. I'll tell it to you—under seal of secrecy! See here," Poufaille went on; "I'm gardener at the Louvre!"

"Nothing wonderful in that," Phil said, as he looked across the Seine at the flower-beds and green turf at the foot of the Louvre façade.

"Not there," Poufaille explained. "Not down there—but up yonder! I'm gardener of the Louvre roofs!"

Looking where Poufaille pointed, Phil perceived, high, high up against the blue sky, tufts of greenery actually growing above that part of the Louvre Palace. He knew there were a few roof-gardens in Paris; but he had never noticed this one.

"Now you understand!" Poufaille said, with gesticulation. "There's no means of keeping up an understanding with them! It has ended by wearing me out. Always roses, iris, and gillyflowers, and gillyflowers, iris, and roses. That sort of stuff won't fill my stomach! I wanted to plant potatoes. I could live on them! But they've refused permission—and I tell you, they're pigs!"

"But they—who are they?"

"Eh! They—when I say 'they' I mean *him!*"

"Well, who is he?"

"The old guardian of the Louvre roofs."

"Ah, yes," said Phil; "I saw him at Mère Michel's. And so you 're his gardener?"

"I am—that is, I was!"

An idea came to Phil. He was stifled in his room; he might have—up there, close by—a garden to himself.

"*Dis donc*, old Poufaille, what if they gave me the gardener's place?"

"That could be done easily; but I warn you—you 'll have no right to cultivate potatoes!"

"I 'll be content with flowers."

"What eccentricity!" Poufaille exclaimed, in the height of astonishment. "Ah, you 're very American!"

CHAPTER VI

THE HANGING GARDENS OF PARIS

HENCEFORTH Phil had glorious days. Poufaille, whom he made his assistant gardener, dug and watered and trimmed the alleys. It increased Phil's expenses, but what a pleasure for him, after work, to pursue his dreams as he walked amid the flowers!

Long months had gone by since Phil's reception into the studio. He had passed through many trials since then, and known discouragements and dogged labor and the joy of progress. Should he walk on a ball to earn his bread or hold the globe in his hand like a Cæsar? An effort, and then another, and an effort once more! The periods of want did not discourage him. Still he had a sad existence, and his only amusement was to come up here and breathe the pure air.

The garden of the Louvre, on top of Perrault's colonnade, was a resting-place for the pigeons in their flight over Paris. They lighted there in bands, heedless of Phil and Poufaille. But one day the birds were all a-flutter. The hanging garden had its Semiramis—Helia!

Phil, while they held their dismayed flight above him,

sat at the feet of Helia, who looked down and smiled at him. To the young girl it was a strange place. For thirty years the inspector of the Louvre roofs—the same man whom Phil had already seen at Mère Michel's—had been making this garden, bringing up little by little the earth in which the plants grew, and the pebbles which covered the alleys. Boxes hidden among the foliage held great shrubs; the perfume of iris and gillyflower, of mignonette and roses, breathed from the flower-beds. Hanging over the borders were ripening currants and peaches and apples; and laurels gave their purple flowers. A whole row of statues and busts outlined the plots. Helia pointed to the busts.

"The one who looks like a circus-rider with his big mustaches—who is he?"

"Napoleon III," Phil answered.

"And that other with his hair brushed up to a point like a clown?"

"That is Louis-Philippe."

"And this one? and that one?"

Phil went on explaining his aërial paradise.

"This is Grévy, that is Carnot; here is M. Thiers—these are all official busts. When the government changes they pack them off to the attic, and the inspector has put them here to ornament his garden.

"And this arm-chair on which I am sitting, with all its gilding rubbed off? Is that official also?" Helia asked, examining the wood, carved with palms, and the red velvet embroidered with the attributes of Law and Justice.

"It's a relic of the Revolution of '48," answered Phil;

"we found it only lately in the attic—it was King Louis-Philippe's throne."

"A king's throne!" Helia said, jumping up. "How can you think of it for a poor girl like me? You would be better in it, Phil. Seat yourself; I wish you to—I command you!" she said, imitating what she considered the royal tone.

"Well, since you wish it—"

"Yes; it's your place—and here is mine," she added, as she seated herself at Phil's feet. "Stay there, Phil—leave me at your feet. I am so happy!"

Happy! She could not have found words to express it all! For months and months and months she had thought of Phil every day and every hour—Phil, friend of her childhood and youth, who had loved her well, who would have protected her against Cemetery—Phil, her hero! And now she saw him again; he was there before her, her head was resting on his knees, in the calm of the beautiful day. How could she have told her happiness?

Phil, on his arrival in Paris, had thought less about Helia at first, overburdened as he was with all his new impressions; but the environment in which he lived was not pleasant to him. His illusions had been cast to earth; he was in an abyss of temptations from which he could not, like Suzanne, free himself by a smile or a shrug. But he soon regained possession of himself; he made of Helia an ideal. He knew no young girl of his own sphere, and he took refuge in the thought of Helia as in a place of safety. She personified his innocent youth. Phil still had in him the old Puritan austerity—he whose family Bible showed on its margin this proud

device written in faded ink by some persecuted ancestor: "No judge but God, no woman but the wife!" He was grateful to Helia because her remembrance protected him; because she seemed to him always so pure.

Accordingly, when Helia came back, with the superb confidence of youth which believes in the everlastingness of things, Phil looked on her again with joy. In spite of the rude life she was leading, she was more modest and charming than ever; and she was so beautiful! Helia came into Phil's life at a dangerous moment—an accomplice of the sun and the fragrance of roses.

"How beautiful she is!" Phil thought, as he looked at her faultless features and her eyes, in which a flame seemed burning.

"How handsome you are!" Helia said to him, scanning his firm expression and look of frankness.

They talked of one thing and another, thinking of each other all the while; or else they remained without speaking, he on his throne, she at his feet, their gaze lost in the tumultuous, motionless ocean of houses.

Paris was around them with its muffled murmur. At the height where they were a pigeon's cooing subdued the noise of three million human beings; at their feet carriages filled the streets, moving on ceaselessly, like a silent river. Helia looked to the horizon before her. First of all she descried, among the trees of the Quai de Conti, on the other side of the Seine, Phil's little window. That was her first halting-place. La Monnaie (the Mint), with all its millions on one side, and the Institut (the palace of the Academy), with its Immortals, on the other, interested her less. For her they were

simply side-pieces, setting Phil's attic in relief. Just behind, over an immensity of roofs, the Palais du Luxembourg served as a background. Farther still, to right and left and everywhere, even in the distant blue, could be seen cupolas and spires, towers and domes. The church of the Sacré-Cœur rose above this ocean like a cliff at whose foot the smoke beat up like waves.

"How beautiful it is! Oh, Phil, is it not beautiful? And how happy I am!" said Helia.

In those first days the strangeness of the place intimidated her; even the busts took from the privacy of the spot. But she soon came to look on them as old friends, treating them as equals, as sovereign to sovereign. When Phil was painting and herself posing for him, she would tranquilly disembarass herself of her collar and place it on the shoulders of Napoleon III and crown the blessed head of Louis-Philippe with her flowery hat. She sat on the old throne, and presided without ceremony over the assembled monarchs.

The little garden seemed immense to her, for it held their happiness. In reality, it occupied only one angle of the middle pediment above the colonnade which looks toward Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois.

From that corner, flat as a Russian steppe, stretched the immense oblong of the zinc roofs which surround the court of the Louvre, forming a desert six hundred yards long by thirty wide. Farther on, pointed roofs and *paravillons* and deep gutters invited to adventure, and they amused themselves in exploring their domain.

Especially the side toward the river attracted them. They went along the balustrade above the Place Saint-

Germain, and turned to the right above the Quai du Louvre. An enormous piece of decoration, composed of bucklers and lances and fasces of piled arms sculptured in the stone, terminated the flat roof, like an army watching over the frontier of their empire. They went down a little iron ladder across the Galerie des Bijoux and turned to the left above the Galerie d'Apollon. Helia followed hesitatingly; it seemed to her that the whole city was looking at them.

In reality, no one could see her. They were shut off from the Seine by the leafy tree-tops; only the cries of children playing on the lawns came up to them, mingled with the twittering of sparrows. The next moment they found themselves in gutters deep as the beds of rivers. They discovered peaceable corners which the old kings of France seemed to have built expressly for themselves. At times they might have thought themselves in gardens of stone.

There were lofty chimneys profusely carved with garlands; the leaves of acanthus and laurel and oak were interlaced with strange flowers, among which laughed the loves and satyrs of the Renaissance. Cornucopias poured at their feet their marble fruits; and goddesses, standing against the blue sky, trumpeted through their shells the happiness of their loves.

In the distance their own garden seemed like an oasis of greenery. After long reveries it was sweet to them to come back and breathe the air of its roses and to hear the birds twitter in the shrubbery of their paradise.

Helia, since she had made Phil's acquaintance, blushed for her ignorance. She had given to reading all the time

left her by her exercises; there was in her something else than superb physical beauty. Sometimes, with the blood in her face and glad to be alive, after scaling with an acrobat's agility the obstacles of the roof, she would stop and ask Phil questions which showed a thoughtful mind. She listened to his replies with attention, little by little ridding herself of the common speech and narrow views of her trade.

"Say, Phil," she remarked to him one day as they were looking out over the great courtyard of the Louvre beneath them, "Blondin would have crossed that, dancing on a tight-rope! I believe I could do it, too," she added, so light and strong did she feel. But she soon saw that such ideas were not pleasing to Phil: he loved her in spite of her being a circus-girl and not because she was one.

At once she spoke of other things.

"No one ever taught me anything, Phil; teach me, you who speak so well."

Phil was radiant. Encouraged by her desire to know, he willingly became her educator and poured out his knowledge for her. He modeled Helia's mind on his own. She belonged to him more and more. She thought like him, through him, for him. Her maiden intelligence gave itself up to him. Phil was grateful to her for the progress she was making. A look from her limpid eyes, a grasp of her hand, were his sweet reward. They moved him more deeply than words of love could have done; and more and more Helia grew to be a part of him. Phil talked to her of Paris and of the persons he knew there. Helia answered with her clear good sense.

"The dirty banks of the Bièvre—what an idea—when the Seine is so pretty at Saint-Cloud! But perhaps ugliness is easier to paint?"

"Perhaps," said Phil. "That must be the reason."

"As for me," Helia said, "I'm only an ignorant girl—I love beautiful things!"

"Look, Phil, what is that we see down there?" she said one day, as she was leaning over a skylight.

Phil looked; they were just above one of the halls of the Egyptian Museum, and they saw strange objects beneath them—statues of gods, mummies of kings, a pell-mell of fallen grandeur. A squatting Sphinx lifted its head and stared at them. Through the dusty glass they might have thought they were looking into an entire past, engulfed in the depths of the sea. A broken column spoke of the crumbling of temples, a mutilated god of the overthrow of altars, a dun-colored sarcophagus of the heaping up of the sand beneath desert winds. Phil explained these dead things to Helia and gave them life.

"Ah," Helia said, "what happiness it is to know!"

They were alone, half kneeling on the roof, their heads bent toward the skylight; around them Paris murmured like an ocean. They could have imagined themselves the survivors of a world destroyed—the only woman and the only man escaped from the cataclysm, while the mysterious Sphinx raised its head as if to say: "Love! for life passes as a dream!"

Phil and Helia arose in silence and came back to their oasis, while above them, in the blue sky, the doves pursued one another.



On the Roofs of the Louvre



"Look at the birds," said Helia. "Come quick and give them their grain."

The doves, as free as those of St. Mark's or of the Guildhall, had quickly accustomed themselves to her, and the presence of Helia did not trouble them.

It was a pleasure to Phil to see Helia in the midst of their cooings and the beating of their wings. They came to eat from her hand. As one of them lighted on her shoulder, Helia had an inspiration. She took the dove and gave a long kiss to its wings.

"Here, Phil! Do'like me!" she said, presenting the other wing to him. "And now, fly away!" she added, letting loose the bird, who in its flight seemed to sow Paris with kisses.

And so the days passed. It was usually in the afternoons that they met. In the mornings Phil worked and Helia studied at home or else rehearsed at the circus. Poufaille took care of the garden. The inspector made his rounds, and sometimes, in the afternoon, watched Helia and Phil from his hiding-place behind a bush.

The old man "of my time" confessed that lovers still existed, and that these were real and kissed each other as they did in "his time" under the Third Empire. But usually they were alone. Suzanne came only now and then to pick a rose.

"What bears you are!" she said as she looked at Phil and Helia. "How can you stay in this desert, with nothing but flowers and flowers, and pigeons and pigeons? You'll not come to the Bon Marché? Good-by, then!" And she would go tumbling down the stairs.

Phil painted a few studies from Helia. She posed for

her portrait amid the flowers. Sometimes, in hours of discouragement, when his work went badly and his future seemed doubtful and the struggle became too painful, Phil would dream as he looked at Helia.

"I will take her out of the life she is leading," he said to himself. "I've promised her! I will tear her from her surroundings; I will make a cultivated woman of her yet. It is God who has led her to cross my path. I—I—"

And for a long time he would remain lost in thought.

In truth, it was a serious moment for him. Phil was too young, too much left to himself, to be content for any length of time with this simple rôle of friendship. He was caught at his own game; and, seeing her day by day more beautiful and good, it seemed to him that he could no longer live without her.

What, then? Should he play with love, taking it for a toy? Should he fashion her heart only to break it? No! The blood which his veins inherited forbade him such meanness. He would have despised himself as if he had been the dust of Sodom.

Should he marry her, then?

"Helia is devotedness itself, tenderness, grace," he thought; "her poverty is the sister of my own: we are equal. And yet, no! it is impossible, really! I cannot marry Helia—a circus-girl!"

But this objection disappeared before the lofty, frank, luminous look of Helia and the candor of her smile.

And still the days passed on. It was splendid weather. Never had they so appreciated their little oasis, where there was always some breeze while at their feet the city

was stifling in the dull heat; though even they themselves were sometimes almost overcome by it.

One afternoon Phil stuck up his canvas in the toolshed and stretched himself in the shade near Helia. They talked of a thousand things or were silent for a time, clasping each other's hands. Suddenly Phil jumped up.

"Let us go!" he said. "It is time. We never stayed so late."

But they found the door closed.

The guardian, no doubt, had glanced around the oasis, and, seeing no one, had closed the door and gone down.

"He must have thought we had gone away," said Phil. "We are prisoners till to-morrow!"

"What an adventure!" said Helia. Both laughed heartily.

Their supper was delightful. Poufaille would have regretted there was no garlic or potatoes; but there were strawberries, and two cakes which Phil had brought for lunch, and good fresh water instead of wine. They had never eaten better; it was as charming as child's play. Helia cut the fruits, dividing the oranges and arranging the parts on leaves from the bushes. To drink, she dipped the glass in a bucket of water at her side.

"Here, Phil, drink!" she said, as she offered him the glass.

"You first!" answered Phil.

Helia touched her lips to the water, and Phil drank off the glass.

"It's better than champagne," he said.

"Here, Phil, here's a beautiful strawberry!"

"Taste it first!" said Phil.

Helia put the berry between her lips, and Phil took it from her with a kiss. The child's play was growing dangerous.

"*Marchons!* Now let's take a walk!" said Phil.

"*C'est ça!* Let's climb our Himalaya!" cried Helia.

This was the name they had given to the Pavillon Sully, which lifts its enormous bulk between the Louvre courtyard and the Cour du Carrousel. It was the culminating-point of the roof. But the excursion was impossible in full daylight; they would have been seen from below; by night no one could see them.

They passed through their wilderness and, following the roof on the other side, came to the foot of the *pavillon*. There, in the shadow of a chimney as big as a tower, iron steps had been placed along the dome from bottom to top, and an iron rod at the side served as a hand-rail.

"*En route!*" said Phil.

The ascent, which was at first straight up, curved little by little over the round dome; then there was again a straight-up ascent along the crown of the dome; and when this was passed they were at the top. Helia followed without difficulty—it was nothing for her.

They were on their Himalaya. To right and left opened the abysses of the courtyards below, and on every side the immense roofs with their humps and turrets and projections stood out black as ebony against the glow of Paris. Lights sparkled above and below—in the heavens and from the city, which seemed another heaven at their feet.

La Villette, the Trocadéro, Montrouge, and the Bastille lighted up their constellations. The Champs-Élysées stretched out like a comet. Montmartre shone palely along the horizon like a far-off nebula; the great circle of the boulevards belted the city with a Milky Way. High up among the stars the Eiffel Tower lifted its torch, like the pole-star.

"How grand it all is!" said Helia. She was on the wide parapet, and her hair, loosened as she climbed up, floated in the wind; her breast rose and fell as she caught her breath again. A thousand broken lights came to them where they stood amid the stars. You might have said they were Youth and Love in the center of the universe.

"How beautiful you are!" said Phil.

"Let us go down," said Helia.

But as they climbed down there was a sudden cry. A rusty step yielded under Phil's weight, and, letting go the hand-rail, he glided toward the abyss.

Without losing her head, with the rapidity and cool decision of a trained acrobat, stretching out one arm and holding hard with the other, and with her breast flat against the wounding rungs, Helia by a mighty effort grasped Phil's wrist as he slid past her. The hand-rail held firm, and Phil was saved. Then they came back again to their oasis.

"Without you I should have been lost," said Phil.

"Oh, no!" Helia answered, laughing bravely. "We were almost down, close to the roof; you would have had a slide, that's all!"

Phil was moved to tears.

"Come, pull yourself together," Helia said, "and then to supper!"

She reached out her hand and took an apple gracefully and offered it to Phil.

"Here, eat!"

Her simple gesture in offering him the apple had, to Phil's mind, something grandly Biblical in it, and the idea overpowered him. As she held out her hand Phil saw that it was bleeding, and exclaimed with anxiety.

"It is nothing," she answered; "it was just now—perhaps while I was holding on to the railing."

With infinite respect he put his lips to the wound—and suddenly he seemed to be drinking love at its source; the fire ran through his veins; he seized Helia with both arms and kissed her full on the mouth, crushing his lips against hers!

"Helia, I love you! I love you, and you shall be my wife!"

"Your wife! Alas, a poor girl like me! How can you think of it, Phil?"

"And I will serve you on my knees!" said Phil.

He pressed Helia to his heart, and the girl wept for joy. Phil drank the tears on her cheeks, and murmured words of love—with Heaven as witness.

CHAPTER VII

A RUDE AWAKENING

NOW followed a time of struggle and want; but Phil supported his trials gaily, and gave the same enthusiasm to his work which he had given to his love.

At the school Phil was successful. The walls of his room became covered with sketches,—life studies, landscapes, compositions,—and more and more studies of Helia, studies without end, all adorably graceful, and showing at once the artist and the lover. All the phases of their existence were there, from the little Saint John, and the girl mending her *maillot* on the steps of the circus-wagon, to the present Helia, the beautiful young woman whom he had decided to make his companion for life.

It was without fear that Phil felt this increase of responsibility. It was even necessary that Helia should use all her authority over him to persuade him to let her go where her engagements called her. He was too poor to pay her forfeits, and he consented. Soon Helia was to go abroad. This would be the last time they should separate; Phil swore it. When Helia should come back,

it would be for always. And what a woman he would make of her! Helia should be his masterpiece.

The portrait he had painted from her would be worth a Salon medal,—his master assured him so,—and that would bring him out of his difficulties. Orders would doubtless follow; but, while waiting, he would have to live. Phil here and there sold a few little paintings. Sometimes he had to run all over Paris to accomplish this; but he told Helia where he was going, and they would come back arm in arm like brother and sister, while her smile scattered all his cares to the winds.

His troubles had their reward in great happiness. There were vases full of flowers upon his table and pretty curtains at his window; and, on his birthday, Helia, with a bouquet, gave him a kiss into which she put all the friendship and gratitude with which her heart was filled.

There were also more substantial joys. They had even as a supreme hope a chicken tied by the leg in a corner of the room. They had intended fattening it. Helia dreamed of a banquet to which she would invite Poufaille and Suzanne; but the chicken was not ready. The banquet was put off, and the day now came when Helia was to go away.

Phil experienced the sadness of farewells at a railway station on the crowded platform; there was the grasping of hands, the promises to write, and the anguish of seeing the train disappear in the night.

He came back overcome with grief. For the first time the poverty of his room overwhelmed him; the paper falling from the walls, his sketches fading upon

them, all was somber and desolate in spite of the flowers on the table and the curtains at the window.

He had never noticed it before, for Helia's presence had absorbed him wholly. Now he realized that he was living in an attic and he blushed at his poverty.

Was he to fritter away his life in this way? How could he—man that he was—endure this? With all his desire he had not been able to keep in Paris the young girl he loved—to tear her from her wandering life and marry her. He, so free and strong, could not rid himself of these bonds of poverty? He swore that he would be free even though he should kill himself with work.

CHAPTER VIII

THE END OF THE GUITAR

ONE effort and then another, and little by little Phil freed himself. So far his health could stand it. He had glimpses of better days. Along with his will his talent also grew strong. His progress was rapid; step by step he mounted upward; and the horizon grew wider before him.

The day when it was certain that Phil would have his Salon medal, Socrate drank off his absinthe savagely and declared:

“That fellow is lost!”

In a few words he put the case before the comrades.

Phil, the Phil they had known as such a “seeker,” with so much personality, was knuckling down! He was turning bourgeois—he was going to have his medal! In other words, he was down on his knees to tickle the soles of the feet of the old bonzes of the Academy!

“That ’s no artist! not what I call an artist!” Socrate went on. And it was plain from the fashion in which Socrate ordered another absinthe that he, at least, would never come to terms! Good old Poufaille was dumb with admiration.

“What a pity Phil ’s not here!” he thought.



“Only put your soul into it!”



A few days later he ran across Phil, who looked tired.

"You're lost, you know; you're in a bad way!" Poufaille said to him as soon as he saw him; and he added mysteriously: "You ought to go to see Socrate—such a wonderful man, *mon cher!*"

"Come on," answered Phil, who wanted a walk.

They found Socrate at the café, smoking his pipe and talking art. Half hidden in a cloud of smoke, he raised his head and looked at Phil.

"You're doing things that please. Look out—take care! You ought to do powerful things! Take any subject at all—a bottle, a pumpkin, if you wish! it doesn't matter—only put your soul into it!"

"Put my soul into a bottle!" said Phil, amused.

Socrate did not admit any discussion of his pronouncements, and struck Phil dumb with a glance.

"I tell you, you must paint with your soul!"

"But I always do my best!" Phil said.

"*Peuh!* your best!" Socrate had an expression of unspeakable pity for Phil's best.

Caracal now and then put in a brief appearance at the Deux Magots, looking from Phil to Socrate and laughing to himself.

"Socrate is right; you ought to do high art! It would be very funny—you who are lucky enough to be the lover—"

"What?" cried Phil.

"—of an acrobat! There's inspiration for you! The trapeze is high art; it soars—very high!"

"Another word and I'll knock you down!" was Phil's answer.

"Calm yourself, *mon cher!* calm yourself!"

But Phil meanwhile was changing visibly. The life he had been leading for some time had worn him out. He now worked less and less, and came more and more under the influence of Socrate. He expended his energy at the café, and in his turn traced out masterpieces on the table. He explained his ideas to Socrate, and discussed them until the landlord turned out the gas and wiped off the masterpieces with his napkin.

"Phil will go far!" Socrate said as he clapped him on the shoulder, adding like a truly superior man:

"You have n't twenty francs about you?"

One day Socrate brought with him, wrapped up in a newspaper, an object which he laid on the bench.

"My guitar," he said.

Socrate's guitar! Every one was acquainted with it. Socrate, painter-poet-philosopher, was a musician as well. He "heard colors" and "saw sounds." He had undertaken a gigantic work—to set the Louvre to music and make colors perceptible to the ear.

He took notes on the spot, colored photographs, and then came home and played them on his guitar with the hand of a genius. Violet was *si*; he made *sol* out of blue; green was a *fa*—and so on up to red, which was *do*.

Phil looked at the guitar with respect; and Socrate had an idea.

"*Tiens!*" he said with a noble air; "take my guitar. It has sounded the 'Mona Lisa'—it has played Rubens and Raphael! It has thrilled with beauty; it contains the Louvre! My soul has vibrated within it! Do a

masterpiece with it! Show on your canvas all that it holds! Take it! Carry it away with you!"

And Phil had taken away the guitar.

"All right," he said the next day, "I will do a masterpiece. They shall see if I am an artist or a pork-packer."

He resolved to "hatch a masterpiece" from this guitar which had thrilled with the soul of Socrate. From that time he went out no longer. He passed whole days in his room, distracted only by the cackling of the chicken in its corner, that brought him back to the realities of life.

"Ah, ha! You 're hungry, are you?" he said, as he threw the chicken some crumbs. Then he looked at the guitar as if he would say: "We 'll have it out together!"

Phil struggled. He dreamed and pondered, and hunted all sorts of material for his sketches. He went to the Louvre to study pictures that had guitars in them.

"The old masters knew nothing about guitars," Phil said one evening at the café. Even the comrades laughed at this.

"How 's the guitar? Does it go?" they asked him.

They spoke only of guitars—guitar this and guitar that—as if all the *estudiantinas* of all the Spains had met together at the Deux Magots.

"It will drive me crazy!" said Phil.

"You will produce a masterpiece," replied Socrate.

One evening Phil came in radiant. "I have it!" he cried.

He explained his idea. Women had been painted in the moonlight, in the sunlight, and in the light of flames.

Eh bien! he, Phil, would light his woman with reflections from a guitar!

"You see, I have a woman's head in shadow," Phil explained to Socrate, as he made lines with his pencil on the table; "and the guitar itself is lighted up by a ray from heaven—do you understand? Music, an echo of heaven, enlightens our sad humanity!"

"Bravo!" exclaimed Socrate.

Poufaille, in his emotion, pressed Phil's hand.

"I'll give you a write-up!" said Caracal; "something really good." But he added to himself: "So you're painting echoes from heaven, pork-packer that you are!"

Phil, under the guidance of Socrate, began his picture. It was hard to set himself again to real work after so many months of doing nothing. He exhausted his strength and spirits over his canvas. He ate next to nothing and grew thin visibly; he lived merely a life of the brain.

"Oh, if I could only have a great success and get rich," he said to himself, "I would have Helia come back!"

He wrote long letters to her. Helia's replies breathed love and the lofty confidence she had in him. At the bottom of the page there was always a circle traced with a pen, and to this he touched his lips.

It was Helia whom he was painting in the background of his picture—a Helia illuminated by a strange light like a vision.

But Phil, worn out and bloodless, no longer had the strength to fix her features on canvas. He was all the

time beginning over again, floundering in his powerlessness.

Every now and then Socrate came to see him and borrowed his last piece of money: "You have n't five francs about you?—and this old overcoat, lend it to me till to-morrow!

"*Tiens! a chicken!*" Socrate went on, continuing his inspection; and he winked at Phil and made a gesture of wringing the fowl's neck—"like that! *couïc!*" Then he looked at the picture.

"It does n't go," Socrate said, rubbing his hands.

At other times the picture seemed to go better.

"Look out! You're going too fast!" Socrate said, in a fright at the idea that his guitar might be brought back to him and that he might no longer have a pretext to come and borrow five francs or an overcoat. Suzanne also paid Phil visits. He often spoke to her of Helia.

"You're always thinking about her!" Suzanne said, as she lighted a cigarette, taking two or three puffs and throwing it away with a *pouah!*

"Well, you must be in love with Helia!" she continued. "I had no idea of it! It won't last, *mon cher!*"

She looked at him with mocking eyes.

"What do you mean by that?" Phil asked.

"Oh, I don't mean to offend you, Monsieur Phil. I believe you're sincere!"

"You think I'm sincere!"

"My dear Phil, I've seen men dragging themselves at my knees,—do you hear? dragging themselves at my knees with tears in their eyes,—men who would n't look at me now!"

"I'm not that kind," said Phil.

"So much the better!" said Suzanne, becoming suddenly grave. "I'm happy for Helia's sake—very happy, because she thinks so, too!"

Phil took up his palette; but Suzanne could not stay quiet.

"Say, Monsieur Phil, how good you are, all the same!"

"I? Why?"

"You don't see they're making fun of you?"

"Who?"

"Why, Caracal's set—Socrate among the rest," Suzanne answered.

"I don't believe it," Phil said. "Socrate is an enthusiast, but he's a real artist!"

"*Penses-tu, bébé!*" Suzanne murmured to herself. Then, passing before the glass, with a twist of her finger she put a lock of hair in place and went out.

Phil seldom had such visits. For the most part of the time he was alone in front of his picture which did not go. There was no end to his fumbling efforts. There were always parts to be done over—and he never succeeded in doing them right.

Socrate arrived one fine evening with his hands in his pockets.

"I'm coming to live with you!" he said. "Landlords are idiots, on my word! Talent and thought never count with them. It's dough they want. If it were n't for you I'd have to sleep out of doors!"

He sat down on a chair and added: "You're willing?"

"Certainly," Phil said, as he drew a mattress near the

stove. "You can sleep there for the present. We'll see later on."

From that day an infernal life began for Phil. Socrate, stretched out by the stove, worried him with advice and made him begin the same thing twenty times over; he encumbered the room, smoking like a locomotive or sleeping until noon. When the thinker's ferocious snoring quite deafened Phil, he would whistle gently to stop it. But a steamer's siren would not have awakened Socrate. Then Phil, in his exasperation, would shake him by the shoulder.

"Let me be! I am thinking of something—hum—something," Socrate would stammer; and the sleeper would begin "thinking" again. It was a continual torture. Phil, moreover, was so weak that he could not even get angry.

One morning Suzanne came in with her arms loaded down with mistletoe and packages. "My friends, tomorrow is Christmas day," she said, as she entered.

"Ah!" Phil answered.

"What—ah?" Suzanne took him up. "Did n't you know it, then?"

"No," said Phil, who was now only a shadow of himself, living on mechanically from day to day.

"But did n't you see," asked Suzanne, "this pretty Christmas card that Helia sent you from London?"

"Ah, yes!" said Phil; "true!"

"Phil is sick," thought Suzanne, "and very sick! He's losing his memory. It's high time that Helia came back!"

"Let me prepare the feast," she said next day.

"You'll see what it will be! Men don't understand such things! Phil, let me do it, will you? I've invited Poufaille. We shall be four at table. There is a fork for each of us!"

"I don't eat much," Phil answered.

"Socrate will eat for you, Monsieur Phil," said Suzanne. She added: "I have a favor to ask you first: I don't want you to kill the chicken!"

"But we shall have nothing else for the meal," said Phil.

"Oh, Monsieur Phil, let her live! She's so amusing! She would follow me in the street, and people would take her for a dog. But wouldn't they laugh!"

"What a child you are!" Phil said.

"And then I'll like you so much for it, and I'll make you a nice salad," Suzanne went on, "and I'll get four sous' worth of fried potatoes."

"Granted!"

Just then they heard a *couïc*, and Socrate threw the chicken with its neck wrung at the feet of Suzanne.

"Enough sentimentality," he said.

Seeing the turn things were taking, Socrate, who was not willing to miss his meal, had slyly stretched out his hand, seized the chicken, and put an end to it.

"Oh, you wretch!" cried Suzanne.

"Bah! the chicken had to end by being eaten," Phil said; "let's not quarrel for that!"

Suzanne made everything ready. She cleared the table of paints and palette, spread the cloth and dishes deftly, and sang as she did the cooking. Poufaille came in, bringing a cheese made of goat's milk and garlic which he had received that morning from his village.



“ He encumbered the room ”

"What smells like that? *Pouah!*" Suzanne cried

"Do you mean my cheese?" said Poufaille, in a pet.

The time had come. With emotion Suzanne placed the chicken on the table.

"Your chicken is n't cooked; you're not much on cooking!" cried Poufaille, who had not forgiven the insult to his cheese.

"I don't know how to cook, don't I?" Suzanne exclaimed; "and I don't understand salads, either? No, perhaps, *hein!*"

Socrate, with his nose in his plate, ate like an ogre, disdainful of idle quarrels.

"The salad?" Phil said, to keep up the gaiety. "Your salad has a little too much vinegar."

"My salad spoiled—oh, insolents! It's worth while taking trouble to please you!" And Suzanne began weeping, or a pretense of weeping. But, suddenly losing her temper, she seized the frying-pan with a "*Tiens! tiens, donc! et aïe donc!* This will teach you!" and while chicken and salad flew across the floor, bang! she threw the pan full tilt into the painted guitar. Phil's picture was rent in twain.

"Oh, forgive me!" Suzanne cried.

All had passed as quick as lightning. Suzanne was at Phil's knees, weeping, begging pardon—oh! how could she have done it, she who knew all the trouble he had taken? And she kept on repeating in her despair: "Oh, Phil, forgive me!"

Phil said not a word; he was pale as death. Poufaille had fallen backward, and, sitting on his cheese, which

had fallen under him, looked in turn at Phil and Suzanne. Socrate was thunderstruck.

"Oh, forgive me, Phil, forgive me!" Suzanne went on repeating.

But she did not finish. To her terror, she saw Phil arise, turn, and fall headlong.

CHAPTER IX

ALAS! POOR HELIA!

PHIL had been struck down by a rush of blood to the brain. For a long time he had been living as in a dream. His fits of absent-mindedness had already amazed Suzanne. Too artificial a life, constant exasperation, his fierce persistence at work which was beyond his present strength, and the ravages of a fixed idea had prepared him for brain-fever. The ruin of his guitar picture was the last blow.

Suzanne quickly drove Socrate out of the room, and took the mattress which was lying on the floor and put it back in its place. She hastily made the bed, and then, with the help of Poufaille, placed Phil on it. He was still without motion, pale and bloodless, like a dead man.

Suzanne ran to the Charité Hôpital. She was acquainted with some of the young hospital doctors, and she explained the case as well as she could. One of them followed her to Phil's studio and made a long examination of him. As soon as he entered the disordered room with its tale of want, the young doctor understood all; he had already cared for victims like this of the ideal.

Phil came back to life and moaned feebly.

"He is not dead!" Suzanne said.

"People don't die like that!" the doctor replied, continuing his examination. "Tell me how it happened."

Suzanne told the doctor everything.

"It is as I thought," he said. "We'll pull him out of it. But, first of all, take away all those canvases—put the room in order; and those portraits of a young girl, always the same one, there along the wall—take them all away! You must deliver him from that vision when he comes back to himself!"

"But he can't live without her," Suzanne said.

The doctor smiled sadly.

"If he only remembers her!" he murmured. "No lesion; long overdoing followed by anemia, too strong emotion, and doubtless some fixed idea," the young doctor rambled on as he looked at the portraits of Helia which Poufaille was taking down. "It's a kind of intoxication of the nervous system—a railway brain, as it were; we'll give him things to build him up, and rest and silence in the meantime."

"Doc—doctor!" Poufaille stammered, livid with fear, "is the disease catching?"

"No fear!" the doctor answered, as he glanced at the hairy face of Poufaille, with its crimson health. "It only comes from exaggerated intellectual functions."

"Oh, I'm better already!" said Poufaille, reassured.

Phil was delirious for a week.

His mind, sunk in abysses of sleep, made obscure efforts to come back to the light of day. Sometimes an ocean of forgetfulness rolled him in its waves. Some-

times great flashes of light illuminated his consciousness in its least details and gave to his dreams the hard relief of marble.

Oftenest he simply wandered, mingling Helia and Suzanne, seeing in his nightmare guitars, yellow on one side and blue on the other, like worlds lighted up at once by sun and moon—a whole skyful of guitars, amid which, motionless, the skull of the poet-painter-sculptor-musician thought constantly, never sleeping—until the thought burned like a red-hot iron, and then Phil put his hand to his own burning forehead and asked for something to drink.

But there was some one to anticipate his wish. A gentle hand raised his head on the pillow and an anxious face bent over him, seeking to read his eyes, now dulled, and now brilliant with the light of fever.

“Is it Helia?” Phil asked.

“It is I!” Helia answered. “Don’t speak—rest! You must rest!”

Yes, Helia had come back. Suzanne, in her belief that Phil was on the point of dying, had not been able to resist the impulse to write to her. It did not occur to Helia to ask if the disease was catching. She gave up everything. She paid her forfeit, took her leave of absence, her own good money going to pay another attraction as a substitute. Nearly all her savings went in this way—but she heeded it not. Nothing in the world would have held her back. She had to be with Phil. She alone had the right to tend him. Another with her own betrothed in time of danger? No!

Helia nursed him night and day. Suzanne helped

her, and Poufaille did the errands, going for food to Mère Michel's and for scuttles of coal to the *charbonnier*. From morning to night his heavy shoes shook the staircase.

"Why don't you give him wine?" he said, as he looked at the sick man.

"Why not goat's-milk cheese?" retorted Suzanne. "Will you keep silence, *grand nigaud*? Go and get some wood!"

"And the money to buy it with?"

"Here!" Helia said.

With what joy Helia watched Phil's progress toward health!

"Dear, dear friend, my little Saint John," Phil said to her. "How can I ever thank you for all you are doing for me!"

He kissed her hand or put it to his burning forehead. Once he rose up and looked around the room saying: "Who is there?"

"It is I—Helia!"

"Who is Helia?"

"Helia, your friend—your Helia; I am here with Suzanne!"

"Out, wretches!" And he fell back exhausted.

"Leave him alone," said the young doctor. "In a fortnight he will be on his feet and I'll send him to the country."

Helia, who was forced to depart, went away. Her leave was over. Besides, she had no more money. Phil grew better and better. At first he was surprised to find his room so changed.

"Where are my pictures?" he asked. "What have you done with them?"

"We've put them one side—you can see them later," answered Suzanne.

"What were they about?" inquired Phil. "Anyway, it's all the same to me!"

The young doctor, with the good-fellowship that binds students together, accompanied him to a public sanatorium not far from Paris. From that moment Phil changed visibly. He who had been so anemic in the vitiated atmosphere of his studio, with his nose always over his oils and colors, and his eyes fixed on the canvas, in Socrate's company, had now abundance of pure air and walks through the open fields. He felt himself reborn, although his head was a little empty and his body stiff and sore like one just taken from the torture-rack. But good food and quiet did wonders for him. He had an excellent constitution, made for work and struggle, and it came up again.

With a beefsteak an idea would arrive; and with a glass of wine joy entered his heart. His blood, renewed, gave him new feelings. He had again become a man, after the illness in which his youth had been shipwrecked.

Helia, anxious to see him, came back one day. How difficult it had been for her—slave to her profession as she was, and still bound to it for many months! Never mind—she came! Phil was better, Phil was cured. She would have his first smile; he would be her Phil in health as in sickness. But at the gate of the sanatorium a magnificent guardian, adorned with brass buttons and a

gilt-banded cap, stopped her. It was society closing its doors to the intrusion of vagabonds. This man of law and order asked Helia why, how, in whose name, by what right, she wished to see Phil, and he refused the favor to her, the mountebank who—had one ever seen the like?—pretended to be his betrothed!

Phil came back to Paris cured. Strength and the daring of courage returned with him. His long rest seemed to have increased his energy tenfold. He went forth from his past as one escapes from a prison, without even looking backward. The young doctor had guessed only too truly: Phil had forgotten many things!

Phil, who had received some unexpected money from his uncle in Virginia, now changed his *quartier*, and set himself up in better style; and the Salon medal gave him his start. His professor made him acquainted with the Duke of Morgana, who ordered from him the great decorative picture of Morgana. The Comtesse de Donjeon asked his aid for her charity sale.

One effort and then another, and this time Phil would reach the goal. He had one of those happy dispositions which attract luck as the magnet attracts iron filings. He was ready; life was open before him like slack water at sea; there was only wanting to him a good breeze to swell his sail.

From what side was it to blow?



“A magnificent guardian stopped her”

CHAPTER X

MISS ETHEL ROWRER OF CHICAGO

THE breeze blew from the West.

Miss Ethel Rowrer, daughter of the great Redmount Rowrer, had just arrived in Paris. She was preceded by the fame of her father, the famous Chicagoan, a business Napoleon. From his office, the center of a network of telegraph and telephone lines, he communicated with the financial universe; and his tremendous toil was building up a world-wide fortune. He thought himself poor, for he had not yet reached the billion mark; but his fame grew. Ethel adored this father. She was proud that men spoke of him. She felt herself a part in his glory; but, really, she could have wished people should pay less attention to herself. Every day the society papers devoted space to her.

"Yesterday evening, Miss Ethel Rowrer, daughter of the famous *milliardaire*, was present at the opera"—and so forth; and there followed a description of her dress.

"To-morrow, Miss Ethel Rowrer, daughter of the famous *milliardaire*, accompanied by her grandmother, will be present at the horse show."

They told how she passed her day; people learned that she had tried on gowns at Paquin's, chosen a hat at

Stagg's, eaten chocolates at Marquis's—while in reality she had stayed at home with “grandma.”

All this gossip annoyed her. One day, however, she laughed heartily. She learned from a paper her intention of buying the tomb of Richard the Lion-hearted to make a bench of it in her hall at Chicago. This earned for Ethel a newspaper article, grave and patriotic.

“Foreigners, touch not our illustrious dead!” was the journalist's conclusion in the evening “Tocsin.”

Richard the Lion-hearted went the rounds of the headlines of the Paris yellow press. Then, one fine day, the papers spoke of an interview of the ex-Empress Eugénie with Miss Ethel Rowrer, daughter of the famous *millionnaire*, R. K. Rowrer. Vieillecloche, in his “Tocsin,” had seen and heard everything. He accused America of mixing itself up with French politics. Miss Ethel did not read the article, otherwise she might have gathered that the “Tocsin” was very ill-informed. That she had seen the empress was true, but there had been no word of politics.

The empress was making a short stay in Paris, as she did every year. Her sorrows had given the former sovereign the love of retirement. She passed her days by her window at the hotel, sometimes looking sadly toward the empty place where the Tuileries had been.

“I see by the paper that Miss Ethel Rowrer is in Paris,” the empress said one day to her *dame de compagnie*. “Is it the granddaughter of the Rowrer I knew? The emperor had great esteem for him; I remember him well. Mr. Rowrer was charged by the government at Washington with a report on the Exposition

of 1867: My husband loved to look into everything himself. Social questions were near to his heart, and it happened that in the evenings he would receive Mr. Rowrer in his private cabinet. The extreme simplicity and moral robustness of the man struck the emperor. He found him full of new ideas which he would have wished to apply in France. I was present at one of their conversations. My little son was playing around them. *Ma chère ami*," Eugénie continued, "I remember it as if it were yesterday. I beg of you to find out if Miss Rowrer is the granddaughter of that man." The next day she learned that this was the fact.

"I should have been astonished if it were not so," said Eugénie. "The emperor foresaw the success of Mr. Rowrer; he knew men." She at once made known to Miss Rowrer that she would be happy to receive her; and Ethel came. Entering, she saw but one thing: in an arm-chair by the window a lady, with her head covered by a black mantilla, sat in the clear sunlight like a dark figure of sorrow.

"Madame," said the lady in waiting, "I present to you Miss Ethel Rowrer."

Ethel saw the dark figure rise from the chair.

"Thank you for coming!" Eugénie said. "I am glad when people come to see me," and she held out her hand.

Ethel bore the hand to her lips and bowed with a grace which charmed Eugénie.

"Be seated, Miss Rowrer," said the empress; "here, beside me," and she pointed with the slender hand of an aged woman to a seat.

Ethel sat down. She was in the presence of Eugénie

de Guzman and Porto-Carrero, Countess of Teba, Marquise of Mopa and Kirkpatrick, Empress of the French—Eugénie the beautiful, the beloved; and it was an old lady warming herself in the sun and looking around timidly.

"How happy I am, madame," said Ethel, "to thank you for the kindnesses shown long ago to my grandfather! His Majesty the Emperor loaded him with favors."

The empress was greatly touched by the sincere accents of Ethel and her faithful remembrance. No one thanked her, now that she was nothing; and this daughter of a *milliardaire* had not forgotten slight kindnesses done long ago to her grandfather.

"I thank you," she said. "The emperor had great esteem for your grandfather; he liked to talk with him. Mr. Rowrer was a remarkable man—rather, he was a man!" added the empress, who had seen so many who were not men.

Ethel blushed with pleasure. Newspaper head-lines constantly made sport of her family, and here was the one-time arbitress of Europe glorifying her grandfather and saying to her "I thank you!"

Then they chatted for a while. Eugénie admired this young girl in her simple elegance and superb health. At the court itself she had never seen a figure more princess-like and radiant.

"When I was a little girl," Ethel said, "my grandfather often spoke to us of those days of glory."

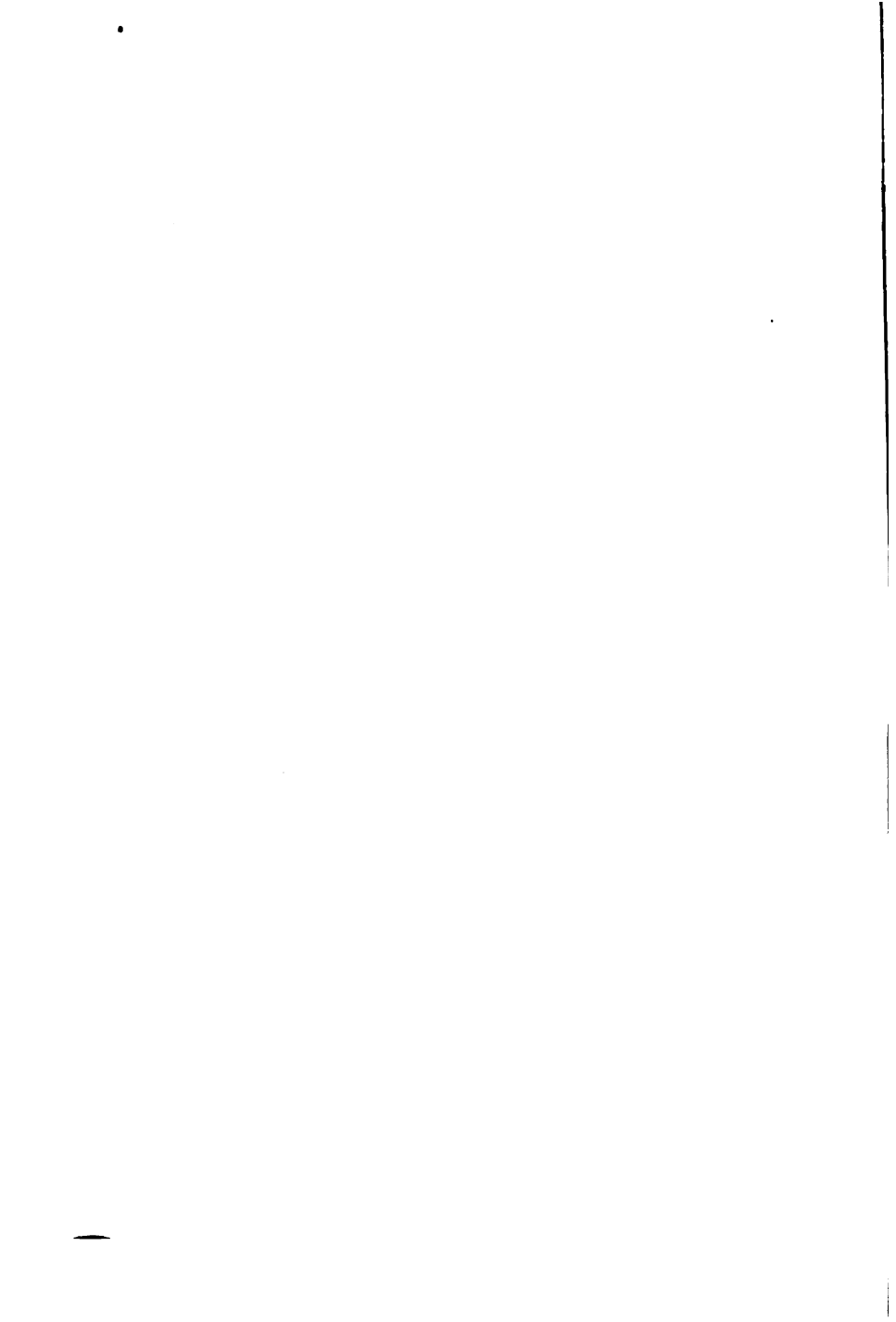
At the word "glory" Eugénie interrupted her.

"Miss Rowrer," she said, pointing with her hand



a sketch —

Miss Ethel and Empress Eugénie



toward the Tuileries, "see what remains of it. There is nothing left. All has passed, all has changed around me. This was once my Paris. It is now yours. I say yours, for, don't you see, mademoiselle, the true sovereigns are young girls like you with their grace and health? To you the world belongs. Ah, what happiness it is to be young!"

There was a moment of silence. The *dame de compagnie* was arranging flowers in a vase. The empress sat dreaming. Did she see again the eighteen years of power wherein she held in her hand the scepter of France? Or the palace which had been destroyed, crumbled into dust, leaving not a wrack behind? Did she think of Miss Rowrer, to-day's young queen, who came to pay her tribute of respect to the royalty of other days? of the conquering force which this young girl represented, the supreme outcome of an ambitious race? of the temptations without number which would assail a creature so spoiled by fate?

Ethel made a motion to take her leave. The empress rose painfully.

"Madame," Ethel began.

"Allow me; I wish to accompany you," Eugénie insisted. "Your visit has done me good."

She leaned lightly on Miss Rowrer's shoulder as she crossed the room.

"Miss Rowrer, I am going to tell you a great secret," said the empress, as she was taking leave; "but one must have been an empress to appreciate it rightly. It is this: remain always simple and artless as you were at fifteen. That is the secret of happiness; there is no

other, believe me! Adieu, mademoiselle. I wish you all happiness in life."

Ethel retained through life the vision of this woman in her mourning garments, with the white hair crowning her forehead. She recalled her gentle voice, her refined features—still resembling the portraits of other days, but without the adorable smile.

"Our people," Ethel said to her grandmother, "interest themselves only in Marie Antoinette and the Princesse de Lamballe. I wish to make a collection concerning the Empress Eugénie—photographs, statuettes. And I will take back to Chicago her portrait in oils. I'll have it done here in Paris under my direction. Who is this Phil who, they say, has so much talent, and has painted so fine a portrait for the Salon—a young girl seated among flowers with doves around her? Cecilia Beaux admires it immensely. He has had a second medal, I believe—he has everything he needs to succeed; and he is an American, they say, and poor and ambitious."

"He is poor and ambitious? Give him a chance," replied grandma.

CHAPTER XI

AN APARTMENT IN THE LATIN QUARTER

NOTHING remained for Ethel but to meet her artist. An opportunity soon offered itself at the Comtesse de Donjeon's five-o'clock tea, at which she was often present.

Ethel, first of all, had looked for an apartment for her own convenience; the hotel, thanks to Vieillecloche, was becoming intolerable.

"Foreigners, stay at home!" the "Tocsin" printed. "Remember the night of the 13th March, 1871, of the day of November 22, 1876. Respect the verdict of the 363. Tremble! The people is bristling its mane of the 16th May, and bares its claws of the 14th July!"

"We'd have done better to stay in Chicago," said grandma.

At first the torrent of carriages and automobiles and bicycles flowing day and night before her window had amused Ethel. But soon she tired of it. There were, indeed, theaters and parks, and visits to dressmakers and society calls. But the theaters were impossible, the parks were only parks after all, the visits to dressmakers were anything but amusing—it's so easy to buy! and as to society, Ethel wished to rest a little—for a change!

"To speak four languages, including my own, to play three instruments, including the harp, which only needs passable arms—all that does n't count. I must go to painting again. Oh, I wish I could have a picture on the line and a Salon medal! I wish I could do a work on La Salle's explorations, at the Bibliothèque Nationale! What would I not give to write like Princess Troubetzkoi or paint like Cecilia Beaux! I am tired of all this idleness. I wish to work; I wish to be something by myself, and not merely the daughter of papa. I wish that— Grandma! let's go to the Latin Quarter! I will be just a student girl living with her good grandmother while she studies art!"

"Let's go, then, to the Latin Quarter, Ethel," said grandma, who would have followed Ethel to the end of the world. "We shall be as well off there as here—or let's go back to America if you wish; for my part I prefer new countries!"

"But the Latin Quarter shall be new for you! You shall see how we'll amuse ourselves," said Ethel, kissing her grandmother.

So they looked for a place in the Latin Quarter. They set off early, and, walking under the great trees of the Luxembourg, or leaning on the balustrades, looked at the palace and the flower-beds of the gardens.

There were bare-legged babies; nurses beribboned from neck to heel; soldiers in red trousers; a priest in a black gown; gardeners in wooden shoes; young girls without hats; students with hats flat-brimmed; everything gave them the feeling that they were abroad, far, far away. Such specimens of the pigmy races which

vegetate in old countries amused grandma, and the garden pleased her greatly.

"This is like Douglas Park—except that it has n't any ornamental mound. Do you remember, Ethel, that globe of earth with continents and seas colored on it in different flowers, and our glorious flag made of white and red pinks and blue corn-flowers?"

"Oh, grandma, for heaven's sake!" said Ethel.

"And yet it's not bad here," continued grandma. "The people are so gay! the soldiers' trousers are too short, and the gardener has wooden shoes; but they look gay; why, I wonder?"

At the beginning they did not venture into the Latin Quarter without some emotion. On the strength of what they had read and seen at the theater they expected moss-grown houses with flowers in the windows, and streets resounding with song, where students and grisettes danced the *cancan*. Grandma soon got over her mistake, after a narrow escape from being crushed by a tram-car in a thoroughfare which was for all the world like State Street.

"It's not so bad as I thought," she said enthusiastically. "It reminds me of Chicago."

In their visits they went up and down an endless number of stairways. Often grandma stayed below, leaving Ethel to visit the apartments.

"Houses without elevators!" said grandma; "Ethel must be crazy!"

She waited for Ethel in deep courtyards or sat in concierges' lodges, near stoves where cabbage-soup was bubbling. More than once, while she was alone in the

lodge, some one would come and ask information from her, taking her for the concierge. Once a butcher's boy, with his basket of meat on his arm, opened the door.

"*B'jour, m'am; what will M'am Gibbon have to-day—culotte de veau?*"

But he ran away in a fright at the sight of Mrs. Rowrer staring at him without answering. Such incidents helped grandma to pass the time.

It was while crossing the Rue Servandoni that they at last found their apartment. An atmosphere of peace seemed to issue forth from the old façade with its immense windows. By the open door they could see a wide stone staircase with a railing of wrought iron. A great tree shaded the silent courtyard. The placard was out: "Apartment to Let." So they entered. The apartment was at once magnificent and simple, all in white, with lines of gold, and carved doors surmounted by painted panels.

The street itself had a certain air of tranquil distinction. One of its extremities seemed barred by the austere walls of the old Luxembourg Palace, and the other by the enormous apse of St. Sulpice, with its statue of St. Paul upright on a pedestal between two columns.

"My favorite saint!" said Ethel, who did not believe in cold and passionless perfection, but in struggles for the best, with tears undoing faults. "St. Paul himself keeps guard over the end of the street! How happy we shall be here, grandma! And we'll heat ourselves with wood fires and be lighted with candles," she added with the joy of a child.

"We've found a real gem of an apartment," Ethel

said to the Comtesse de Donjeon, that very evening at her "five"-o'clock, which was at four. "Imagine, madame, a door covered with carving, through which you go underneath Medusa heads and cornucopias. We shall burn oil-lamps and candles; that will make us wish to wear flounces and dress our hair *à la belle poule*—"

"And to play '*Il pleut, bergère*' on a spinet!" the countess interrupted. "Where did you discover such a gem of an apartment!"

"In the Rue Servandoni," said Ethel.

"I know," said the countess; "it's near St. Sulpice. And, by the way, dear Miss Rowrer, if you wish any bric-à-brac to furnish your shelves, I can recommend you a precious man, a great connoisseur and a distinguished critic, a journalist of the good cause—M. Caracal."

"Thank you so much, madame! M. Caracal would be very useful to me," Miss Rowrer had answered.

"He's a friend of the Duke of Morgania and of your fellow-countryman, Mr. Phil Longwill, whom you are acquainted with, perhaps."

"Only by name," Ethel said.

"The duke and Mr. Longwill are coming here to-day, I believe. I will present them to you if you wish."

They were in the great salon in the half-darkness of the silken curtains. Although it was broad daylight outside, lighted lamps shed a yellow glow and sparkled amid the glass of the chandeliers and the gold frames of paintings. A valet announced two ladies—"Mme. and Mlle. de Grojean!" The countess hastened toward them.

Ethel was looking vaguely into the depths of the room. Two other visitors came in, talking together like friends.

“His Highness the Duke of Morgania.

“Monsieur Phil Longwill!”

CHAPTER XII

ETHEL'S IDEA OF A MAN

AS a consequence of their meeting, Ethel became Phil's pupil. Having made his acquaintance at the Comtesse de Donjeon's, she gave him a "chance," as grandma had told her to do. She ordered from him two pictures according to ideas of her own: first, Eugénie young and beautiful, present in the emperor's cabinet at the reception of Rowrer, the grandfather; then Miss Rowrer had him paint Eugénie aged and broken, seated by the window and looking far away on the empty Place of the Tuileries. Better and better satisfied, she ordered from him grandma's and her own portrait. These orders were enough to "launch" Phil, as they say, and brought him other orders from the society frequented by Miss Rowrer.

Ethel, before she came to Phil, had been working in the *École des Beaux-Arts*; but there the studio seemed gloomy to her and she stifled in it. Moreover, she was already rather tired of the Latin Quarter on account of her fellow-countrymen whom she met there.

She had a grudge against some of them for imitating and even exaggerating the most foolish faults of a certain class of students. She did not approve their wearing their hair like a horse's mane, their velvet trousers

and knit-woolen jackets, and their way of carrying around with them boxes and brushes and canvases as if they were sign-painters. And when she saw them seated on the curbstone *terrasses* before cafés, drinking in public and spitting everywhere and puffing the smoke of their cigarettes into the faces of the passers-by, it exasperated her. She had a desire to call out to them: "Up! and go to work!"

As she did not like the art academies of the Quarter, she decided for Phil's studio. She had another reason for doing this. The *École des Beaux-Arts* was too near, and Ethel needed exercise. In spite of the enormous distance to Phil's studio, she always went to it on foot—"to keep myself in training," she said. She came back the same way—to give herself an appetite. Thus every morning she had four hours' work and two hours' walk—just to keep "in shape."

Ethel, one morning, was at the studio with Mlle. Yvonne de Grojean. The model's rest was over and they were beginning work again. The concierge—the old man "of my time" and former inspector of the Louvre roofs—mounted the table and posed before the girls dressed as a Louis Quinze marquis. There was a pushing about of easels and chairs, palettes were taken up, and at once the model was beset with remarks:

"Model—the head!"

"Model—the foot!"

"Model—smile!"

At this formal injunction the concierge bridled up, distorted his eyes, twisted his lips, and swelled out his neck like a goiter.

Ethel and Mlle. Yvonne were not working from the Louis Quinze model. Helia posed for them in a corner of the studio—the corner of “still life.” She happened to be free that morning, as the figure of Morgana which Phil was painting from her was nearly finished. Helia had come down to the pupils’ studio to please Ethel, who greatly desired to do a head of the Madonna from her.

Ethel and Mlle. Yvonne chatted together as they added touches to their water-colors. Ethel was relating to her friend, Yvonne de Grojean, the visit she had paid some time before to Phil’s private studio, where she had seen the Duke of Morgania. She had also described the magnificent decorative painting which Phil was finishing for the duke.

Their conversation was punctuated here and there by the remarks cried out around them to the Louis Quinze marquis:

“Model—the eye!”

“Model—the mouth!”

“Really,” said Ethel, “that concierge is incorrigible. Why does he persist in *not* looking like the students’ drawings?”

Mlle. de Grojean at Ethel’s side laughed heartily.

“How droll you are!”

Helia smiled in spite of herself.

“The papers keep me in good humor,” Ethel answered. “I venture there’s something in them again about Richard the Lion-hearted,” she continued, pointing to a paper on the chair. “All sorts of bargains are offered to me ever since that story—usually old mum-

mies. No; there is nothing about Richard to-day," Ethel remarked, as she ran through the head-lines. But she received her "pin-prick" all the same. In an open letter some one attacked American society and the lack of solidity in its family ties—signed, "H. Ochsenmaul-salatsfabrikant." This annoyed Miss Rowrer more than personal attack. She was amazed that people could have such thoughts about her country.

"In your country," was the conclusion of the Salatsfabrikant, "the young men run after money and the young women after titles."

"Personally I had the idea that titles were running after me," thought Ethel, who had had reasons for believing so during the three months in which the duke had been paying her court.

She had already forgotten the open letter, but she kept on thinking of the subject it had started up in her mind.

Ah, certainly not! Titles were not to be her aim in life. Most of all, since her visit to the empress, she had promised herself to give worldly grandeurs only the esteem they deserve. A title! A title no more takes from a man's qualities than it adds to them. The main thing for a man is, not to be a duke or prince; it is, first and foremost—to be a man!

Mlle. Yvonne was also painting a Madonna's head from Helia. She wished to make a medallion of it as a present for her mother. Helia took pleasure in posing for these girls who were so kind to her.

Ethel, after seeing Helia at Phil's the day after the Quat'z-Arts Ball, had met her several times, and felt a

very sincere sympathy for her. She seemed to her to be "the right sort of girl."

She had even proposed to send her to Chicago as a professor of physical training in the Women's University founded by her father. The situation was brilliant, her future would be assured, and she would probably make a very good marriage before long. Helia thanked her effusively—but something kept her in Paris; and she added: "Paris alone gives the consecration to artistes!"

Ethel knew that Helia was preparing a number which was to make a sensation. Meanwhile, she had her little sister, and, so it seemed, was paying for the old clown Cemetery out of pure goodness of soul. For the time being she was pinched for money. Ethel would have been happy to do her a kindness; but she knew that Helia would never accept anything under any form whatsoever, not even a gift to Sœurette. A smile, yes! a kind word, yes! an obligation, no!

It was the same with Suzanne, the model who sometimes posed for pupils, and whose acquaintance Ethel had also made. This simplicity of manners, which was at the foundation of their race, touched Ethel. She pardoned the "pigmies" many things for the sake of these brave little hearts. An acrobat and a model—what matters it? Character is everything!

"Model—time! Rest!"

There was a noise of palettes laid aside and pupils rising in their places. The old marquis telescoped his neck into his laces and came down from the table.

"You who are collecting mummies," Yvonne de Gro-

jean said, laughing, to Ethel, "you ought to add the concierge; he is a type!"

"Don't laugh, Yvonne," said Ethel; "he would do very well in our hall in Chicago; he'd give it an air of the old régime; there are heaps of men like that in princely anterooms."

Painting was over and they were now talking in the still-life corner. Of the other students some were walking two by two, some were standing, and others seated on the high stools; and some were grouped about Mlle. Yvonne and Ethel, who was, in a way, their leader, by the social position she held, and the prestige of her name. All around her they conversed as in a parlor, amusing themselves with a passing broil between the English Miss Arabella and Mlle. Yvonne.

"England should not allow it!" Miss Arabella had exclaimed, speaking of some performance of French politics.

"French affairs concern us alone!" Mlle. Yvonne, usually so timid, had retorted, as she raised her head whereon her hair was rolled like a helmet.

Miss Rozenkrantz, a Swede with spectacles, made peace, as if by chance, with her explanation of a new association in Stockholm—the "Women's Anti-Marriage League."

"What are its articles?" Miss Rowrer asked.

"Absolute indifference to men—woman by herself in all and for all—meetings—lectures to girls—mutual aid—unions."

Conversation followed in which the Anti-Marriage League was discussed. On such subjects Mlle. Yvonne



“ Ethel, who was their leader ”

did not speak. She listened with astonishment to these young women from the countries of the North talking among themselves of things on which she never touched: marriage and anti-marriage—leagues—clubs—of all this she was ignorant.

Mlle. Yvonne was passing two months in Paris. It was the Comtesse de Donjeon, a friend of the Grojean family, who had introduced her to Miss Rowrer. The two young women were unlike both in education and ideas—and they at once became great friends. But Mlle. Yvonne was shortly to return to her old tranquil, provincial home, and she was enjoying her last weeks in Paris. To-day, especially, she was delighted to hear them talking freely before her, and, most of all, about marriage. For her it was the escapade of a school-girl looking over the wall at the fruits of a forbidden garden.

One thing, however, was troubling her. Her mother had not come back, as she always did, to take her home. Doubtless there was some unforeseen hindrance. She confided her disquiet to Ethel.

"Don't worry; your mother will come. And even if she does not, you can go away alone, I suppose."

"What!" said Yvonne, "cross Paris all alone? You would n't think of it!"

"But I do it!"

"That is true," Yvonne said, blushing.

They were speaking in a low tone; the others were not listening, but surrounded Miss Rozenkrantz.

"What is more natural than to go about alone?" Ethel said to Yvonne. "What harm is there, *voyons?*

You slander your fellow-countrymen—the men of Paris are not tigers, I imagine. What danger is there?"

"Oh, none," Yvonne admitted; "but they are said to be so gallant!"

"Gallant! An ill-bred fellow accosts you in the street and you say he is gallant?"

"Not exactly, no," Yvonne hastened to say; "it's just the contrary."

"Men such as that," said Ethel, "are not men—that's all!"

There was a moment of silence.

"Men who are not men—that must be another of Miss Ethel's pleasantries," thought Yvonne.

Ethel looked at her water-color, throwing back her shoulders to judge better of the effect. What she did not understand was that a young woman like Yvonne should accommodate herself to such a state of affairs—Yvonne, who but now, during the squabble with Miss Arabella, had the decided air of some Gaulish Amazon. Why should she be so timid with regard to such insolent dogs? She felt really a lofty and protecting pity for this sister of an old country, nice as she was.

"Men such as that!" she began again, in a tone of contempt.

"Such as what?" Yvonne timidly asked. "Do you mean workmen, men with blouses—those of whom you were just speaking—those who are not—"

"Who said anything like that?" replied Ethel. "Dress has nothing to do with it."

"It's their profession, then?" Yvonne asked again;

"or is it nationality? The Englishman is different from the Frenchman—the German—"

"Ochsenmaulsalatsfabrikant!" Ethel interrupted.

"All go to make up so many different types, I know," Mlle. Yvonne continued.

"It's nothing of all that!" said Ethel, seriously. "When I say *a man* I speak neither of an officer nor of a lawyer nor of a doctor nor a workman nor a prince. Rich or poor, German, English, or French—it does n't matter!"

The students had gathered round. They asked one another what Miss Rowrer meant—who, then, is the *rara avis* that is neither this nor that—not a workman, not a prince?

Helia kept silence and listened. Which man? She had known one who seemed to her frank and loyal, and gave her his word; and then—then he had forgotten it! What meaning, then, was there in Miss Rowrer's words? But she understood perfectly, and she blushed for Phil when Ethel, to signify those qualities of uprightness, equity, and honor—that respect for one's word once given—which she meant by "man," repeated in a tone of deepest conviction:

"I say A MAN!"



PART II

MORE THAN QUEEN

CHAPTER I

WANTED—A DUCHESS!

AS he had himself said to Ethel the day of his visit to Phil's studio, Conrad di Tagliaferro, Duke of Morgania, was much to be pitied—he had to quit Paris!

The duke reveled in the life of the Boulevard, losing himself amid the crowd, climbing to the tops of omnibuses, taking a cab to the opera, getting himself spoken of in the society news of the papers. He was seen everywhere,—in salons and at the theater, at the clubs and at the races. There was no ceremony for him, and he had no cares. Arriving in Paris he put aside all the duties of his position as you might leave a coat in the cloak-room. When he accepted a friend's invitation he always insisted that there should be no questions of etiquette.

“*Sans cérémonie*—it 's understood,” and he would add in Parisian slang, “*au hazard de la fourchette* [pot-luck]!”

However, there was a “but.” His people pestered him from afar in the shape of two voivodes who had been delegated by his nobles, and who followed him even to his late suppers like some twofold Banquo specter.

These delegates were in Paris to urge his return. The duke had been lucky enough to avoid them until now; but their mere présence said clearly enough that things were going wrong in Morgana.

Since the fabulous days of Morgana the unity of this little warlike people had always been kept at its frontier, beneath the shadow of its great red banner with the white cross facing barbarism; and it was from that side the storm was muttering once again.

There were grave reports from Macedonia. Houses were being burned and convoys pillaged. All the villages from Kassovo to Monastir were in ebullition. Bands of bashi-bazouks had come as far as the Drina. It would be necessary to go back. The duke saw it clearly—great events were preparing.

"You were present, I believe," the duke said to Caracal, "when I spoke at Phil's place of the old sorceress, who is a prophetess for some and a saint for others, and has more influence in the country than all the journalists in the world could have. This old woman predicts the future. I assure you, Caracal, she foretells astonishing things, absolutely amazing, and I myself have seen them realized many times over. Just now she is upsetting the country with talk about the return of Morgana."

"But there 's no harm in that," Caracal remarked.

"She excites the people, and it will end in war, that 's all!" answered the duke, gravely. "Ah! the prophetess and her prophecies—they are a load upon my back, I can tell you!"

"Why don't you shut her up in a madhouse?"

“That ’s more easily said than done,” observed the duke. “An old woman adored by an entire people—you may not believe me, but—I assure you—she ’s stronger than I!”

Caracal looked at the duke to see if he was in earnest. But a duke’s psychology was entirely beyond his ken, subtle observer as he was. The duke’s animosity against the sorceress had a look of embroilment between sovereigns.

While the prospect of all these troubles alienated the duke from Morgania, so a creature dear to his heart attracted him homeward. This was his only child, his son, the little Duke Adalbert. All the duke’s affections were centered upon this son, after the death of the duchess. It had not been a happy marriage. First of all, his wife had made him take a dislike to his people. She was an Austrian archduchess—more than an aristocrat, an Olympian; and the fall from the elegance of Vienna life to severe duties in Morgania filled her with bitterness. She detested her subjects, and they paid her back the compliment. Never had a duchess been so unpopular.

Until then,—not to speak of the heroine who had founded the glory of the house,—all the duchesses had had the gift of pleasing the people, perhaps because most of them were themselves sprung from the people. Love’s fancies had reigned in the house of Tagliaferro, and, thanks to such spontaneousness of feeling, misalliances had not been rare. Just as at the Austrian court Archduke Henry, the emperor’s nephew, had espoused a dancing-girl who became Baroness Wei-

deck, and before him Archduke John had married the pretty Anna Plochel, a postmaster's daughter, so the Dukes of Morgania, with aristocratic loftiness, chose their consorts wherever it seemed good to them.

Such duchesses the people of Morgania preferred to all others. It was very important for the future of the house that she who was to succeed the mother of Adalbert should possess all those qualities which make a woman adorable—goodness, beauty, and valor.

In Morgania, where diplomatic refinements were unknown, there was needed a young woman of new blood, bringing energy with her, and able to revive confidence. There had been such in the ancestry of Duke Conrad—heroines sprung from the people, daughters of the mountain or the plain.

"You shall see their statues," the duke said one day to Ethel, who had come with her grandmother to see his collections—"that is, if you do me the honor of stopping in Morgania when you make your Mediterranean yacht tour."

"It is a promise," said Ethel.

"It will interest you, Miss Rowrer, to visit my stronghold. It is one of the most ancient in Europe. The donjon at the entrance is formidable. It was in 1221, when he returned from the Crusade of Honorius III and Andrew II, King of Hungary, that my ancestor, Enguerrand, had it built, along with the great hall used for the people's assemblages; for, to procure the necessary resources of his expedition, he had been obliged to enfranchise the serfs."

"He did well," observed grandma.

"He could not have done better," the duke replied. "Moreover, there came out of it the Hall, which is a masterpiece."

"The Hall, doubtless, is decorated with the arms and armor of the epoch!—that will interest me greatly."

"There are neither cuirasses nor gauntlets," answered the duke; "neither helmets nor the armor of knights on horseback, as in the Tower of London or the Invalides in Paris. But such as it is, it will interest you even more. It has something that will go straight to your heart."

"Really?" Ethel asked. "And what can that be?"

"This," the duke went on. "The Walhalla of Bavaria has been built to German heroes; our Hall is built to the glory, not of the heroes, but of the heroines of Morgania. My ancestor, Enguerrand, consecrated his Hall to the glorification of our women."

"Ah!" Ethel exclaimed, deeply interested.

"A great idea!" said grandma. "America ought to have a hall like that at Lincoln Park. We have our heroines, too—it would be full in little time!"

"Madame Rowrer is right," said the duke. "To be a heroine there is no need to fight, sword in hand; the fulfilment of the civil and moral virtues makes heroines, and devotedness and love have their own martyrs. But I am going to show you an old engraving of the Hall."

The duke rose and searched in a portfolio.

"Two characteristic features," he continued, "strike one in feudalism: individual energy and im-

provement in the condition of women. When Duke Enguerrand went forth to look for war and adventures, my ancestress, Bertha, remained in Morgania as the duke's representative, clothed with the right of administering justice, and charged, during his absence, with the defense and honor of the country. Such sovereign power often gave to the women of that time virtues which they had no opportunity of exercising otherwise.

"When the knights and men-at-arms were gone to the Holy Land, only the women remained at home. Then Hungary was invaded by the Mongols, who ravaged everything down to the Adriatic. Morgania was on the point of perishing; but Bertha the Horsewoman, as the people called her ever after, scoured the country the whole winter long, leading convoys, and bringing in supplies from Italy and mercenaries from Germany. Thus she repelled the Mongols and saved Morgania from invasion, and the people from famine.

"When the duke came back he found Morgania in mourning, for the duchess had died at her task. Saint Morgana, the heroic ancestress, already had her altars. The duke wished to consecrate the glory of the others as well; and he built the Hall so that henceforth the people might gather around their images under the saint's protection. Dying he expressed a wish that his descendants should dedicate the Hall to the glory of their women. Here is the engraving," the duke said, turning toward Miss Rowrer and grandma.

"Indeed," said Ethel, "all this interests me tremen-



“ ‘Here is the engraving’ ”

dously. So your ancestor Enguerrand was the creator of women's rights!"

Ethel and grandma examined the engraving. It represented an octagonal hall of somber and massive aspect. The eight segments of the vaulted roof were separated by stone ribbing that met in a fleuron, from which hung an immense chandelier. The arches rested on eight columns. Between two of these a solid wall had been built; it was covered with vestiges of ancient painting. Stone steps mounted up to this wall, making a platform on which there was a bench of carved wood.

"Let me be your guide," said the duke. "This large wooden bench against the wall between the two columns is the ducal throne. The stuffs and cushions which cover it were brought from Tyre and Sidon by Enguerrand."

"That is very beautiful," Ethel interrupted, "but it is your heroines that interest me most—where are they in all this? Bertha the Horsewoman, where is she?"

"Here—this statue," the duke replied. "As you see, there are three statues facing each other—first Bertha, then Thilda, the duchess who killed Sultan Murad at Kroja with her own hand, and then Rhodaïs the Slave. The fourth pedestal is still empty."

"Was there a slave in your ancestry?" Ethel asked. "It is the name you apply to Rhodaïs."

"She was the daughter of a simple voivode," said the duke. "She accompanied to Venice the daughter of the King of Hungary, whose kingdom had partly fallen

under the power of the Turks. But they were attacked by an Ottoman galley and every one was massacred except Rhodaïs. As she trampled the Crescent under foot they chained her to the rowers' bench, from which she escaped only by a shipwreck. She came back to Morgania, had the duke buy a galley in Venice, chose a crew of hardy corsairs, and began a war without mercy against the Turks who infested the coast. She put herself at the service of Don Juan of Austria at the battle of Lepanto. My ancestor, Hugh XIII, made her his duchess, and Philip II of Spain, as a recompense of her valor, gave her the hereditary title, unknown till then, of Lady Knight of Malta."

"That was a woman!" Ethel said. "With a duchess like Rhodaïs a people could not perish! But Morgana, the fairy, the saint, in whose honor the Hall was built—I do not see her?"

"On the contrary, she is everywhere. She lights up the Hall with her rays," the duke replied. "This engraving does not give the entrance portal which overlooks city and sea and country. This portal was made at Enguerrand's return. It is like the entrance to an enchanted palace; and by its magnificence and delicate ornamentation contrasts with the general severity of the Hall. As in Gothic churches this portal sets far back into the interior. An immense stained-glass window overlooks it; and from this light falls in floods through one of the sides of the vaulted roof, which was purposely suppressed."

"I understand," Ethel said. "Face to face with the ducal throne, your ancestress Morgana dominates everything!"

"Yes," continued the duke; "at eventide the setting sun enters the interior of the Hall through this window, which represents the glorious martyrdom of Morgana. You would say that her blood threw crimson stains upon the throne itself and the glow of her miracle lighted up the whole hall."

"What about the fresco which has left traces on the wall behind the throne? Was it, too, of some war-like deed?" Ethel asked.

"No; this one represented the legend of Morgana rising from the sea and bringing in her arms what should be the fortune of Morgania. What was it she was bringing in her arms? I know not. Morgana, it appears, was represented in the fresco issuing from the sea, and covered with seaweed."

"Just as in the picture of Monsieur Phil," remarked Ethel.

"Exactly so," said the duke. "It was the moment I chose; and your fellow-countryman has reconstructed it. In my next trip to Morgania Monsieur Phil is to come to the castle and finish his picture on the spot. Before then I shall have time to search through the archives, and perhaps I shall find what it was Morgana was bringing in her arms."

Thereupon Miss Rowrer and grandma went away. The duke remained alone. He retired to his study—a den plastered with sporting photographs—and sinking on a sofa lighted a cigarette and began dreaming as he followed the light smoke with his eye.

"Morgana—she who was to come forth from the sea bringing fortune and happiness in her arms—is it not Miss Rowrer landing in her yacht before the

castle? She, too, comes from the setting sun. She, too, brings fortune. She, too, would be adored by the people. What a strange coincidence! The old sorceress is not so crazy after all," the duke said to himself, "and there is nothing impossible in it! Whatever may be the personal qualities and fabulous fortune of Miss Rowrer, a Duke Tagliaferro is her equal. Through me she would be Duchess of Morgania, Protectress of the Skipetars, Lady Knight of Malta, Princess of Kroja, Queen of Antioch in the Holy Land, allied to the court of Prussia, and cousin of the Hapsburgs. There is not an older nor a nobler house in Europe."

It made the duke's head swim only to think of it. He was a descendant of Hugh, the Frankish chief to whom Theodosius had given one of his twelve duchies of the West, and since that time nothing—not even Attila's torrent, nor the Turks, nor Charles the V, nor so many famines, nor so many wars—nothing had ever struck the sword from the hands of his ancestors—nothing save the anger of the people against Duke Adhemar, who was driven from the throne because he had delivered up Morgana!

I will maintain by the sword! This proud device had never proved false, as the old iron-bound archives could witness. The duke felt weary—wearied with all the weariness and old with all the age of all his ancestors; and his fingers had scarcely the strength to knock the ashes from his cigarette.

What a youth his inheritance of glory had won for him! How he had envied in other days the little peasants who ran barefoot along the beach, whereas

he, brought up by sad-faced priests in the old feudal castle, was less free than a slave. Then came his marriage, which had been settled for him for reasons of state, and the death of his father, which gave him the administration of the duchy—an ungrateful task. No! He had not lived! Enough of the gloomy palace and rude peasants! He wished to live and to be amused—to be young for once in his life. He would know happiness, at least!

The duke gazed at the blue curls of smoke floating as aimlessly as himself. He had not even hoped for a marriage like this with Miss Rowrer, having all the advantages of a royal marriage, without any of its inconveniences. She would be one of the richest and most brilliant sovereigns of Europe.

Never had life appeared sweeter to him than now. He was buoyed up with hope and illusions. There was this marriage for the near future, and meanwhile he could enjoy the little time he still had to pass in Paris. This evening, for instance, he was to go with Caracal and meet Helia behind the scenes of the Nouveau-Cirque. Perhaps he was thinking more than he ought of Helia, but he wished to thank her before his departure for having posed as Morgana.

A lackey broke in upon his reverie, handing the duke two cartes-de-visite on a silver plate.

“Zrnitschka!”

“Bjelopawlitji!”

“The devil!” said the duke. “My two voivodes—my two kill-joys!”

Ah! those two sad-faced “ambassadors of the sor-

ceress"—would they never cease harassing him? The valet spoke:

"The gentlemen wish to have the honor of presenting their homage to monseigneur."

"Yes; I am acquainted with their homage," the duke said, below his voice, as he drew out his watch.

"Half-past six, and Caracal is waiting for me—and Helia, whom I have to see—"

"What answer shall I give these gentlemen?" asked the valet.

"How do I know!" answered the duke, vexed at being troubled while thinking of so many things.

"Tell them—oh, tell them I am having a political interview—a tête-à-tête with the representative of a great power!"

CHAPTER II

A PARISIAN DÉBUT

THE duke, imposing and superb, was present; and Caracal, with his monocle in his eye, was beside him. It was the first night of Helia. If it had been a common first night at the Théâtre Français, the duke would have thought himself dishonored by appearing before the second act. But he wished to offer a rose to Helia, and so he, a gentleman, had committed and made Caracal commit an unheard-of thing—they had dined between seven and eight so as to arrive on time.

“You are interested in behind the scenes? Your presence greatly honors us, monseigneur,” said the director of the Cirque as he passed by them.

Was he interested? He was more than that—he was enthralled.

First of all, Caracal suggested it was very chic to have the air of paying court to Helia, who to-morrow would be celebrated as a star. This would give an irresistible Don Juan mark to his ducal title.

“That will help me with Miss Rowrer,” thought the duke, who was pupil and plaything of the clever

Caracal. There was a single shadow in his picture—Phil was not there!

Phil was to accompany Miss Rowrer to the American Club Exhibition; but this touched the duke—oh, so very slightly. Miss Rowrer had a great esteem for Phil, but pshaw! a poor devil of an artist was no rival for him, a duke with his duchy, descended from fairies and queens and saints! Against all this what could avail her innocent flirtation with Phil?

The public had not yet come and the hall was empty. Here and there the electric globes were lighting up; but the duke and Caracal beheld a sight which helped them to pass the time. The sensational equestrienne, the Marquesa de Guerrera, was coming down the steps, enameled and rouged and resplendent with diamonds. Monseigneur gallantly held her stirrup as she painfully climbed upon her horse. She dashed out on the track in front of the empty benches for a short rehearsal. She asked for the orchestra and the lights, to accustom her horse to the noise and glitter. She was afraid he would take fright. She trembled at his slightest shying.

“Take away that white paper—that program on the bench; take it away! And do you applaud!” the Marquesa called to the stable-boys who approached the ring.

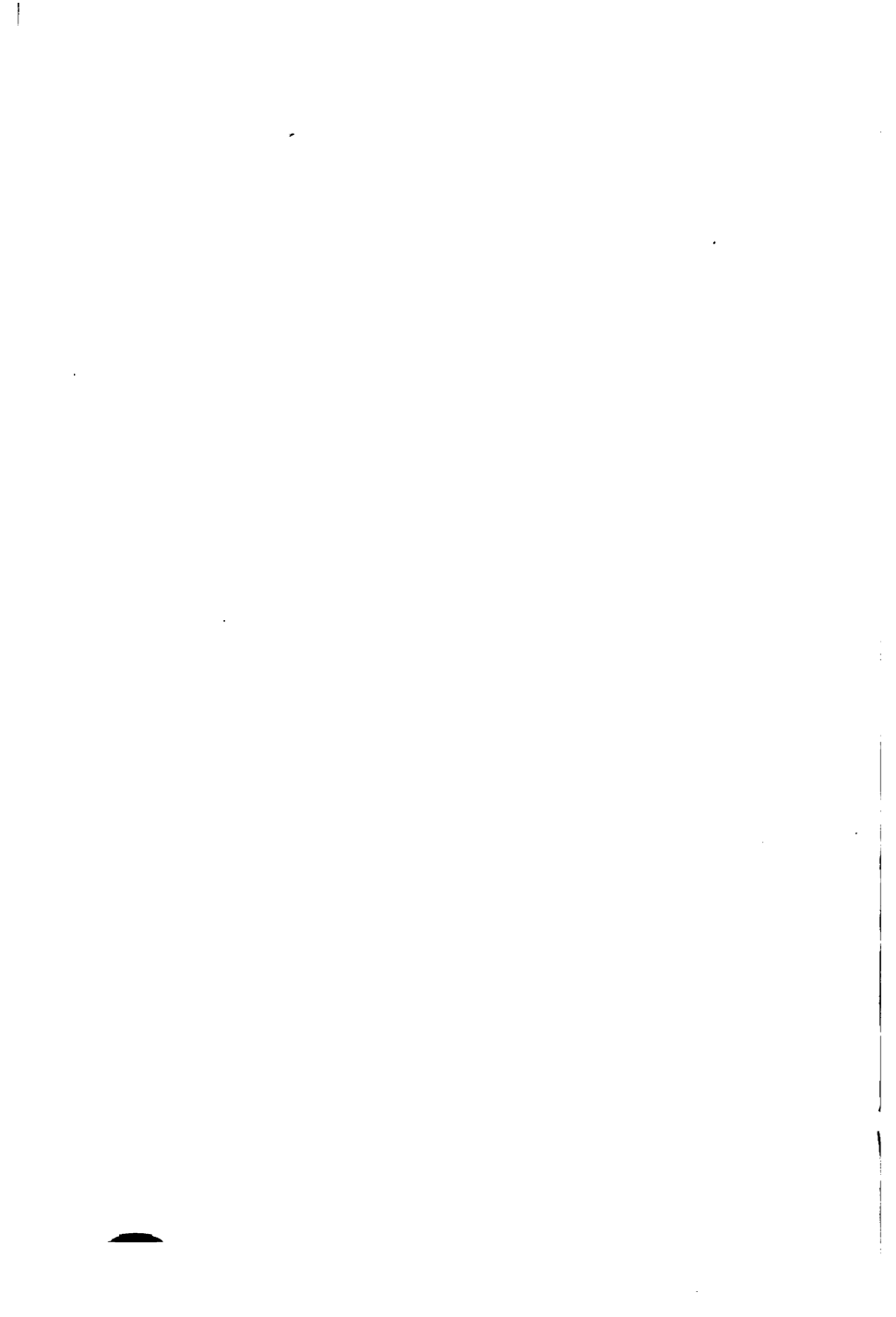
“Applaud! to accustom him to the bravos!”

The horse began turning like a great mechanical plaything with a doll on its back.

“The horse does all the work!” said Suzanne behind the duke. She had just arrived with Helia and Sœurrette, Helia’s little sister.



"Giving the Flower to the Child"



"No, I assure you," said Helia, "*haute école* riding is difficult!"

The duke turned.

"How do you do, mesdemoiselles?" he said, lifting his hat.

"Monseigneur—" Helia began.

"Oh, monsieur," Sœurette broke in, "it 's for me, is n't it?—the pretty rose?"

"Why—why—yes!" the duke answered, giving the flower to the child.

He remarked Helia's surprise. She seemed troubled by his visit. It had been the affair of a moment, but it was sufficient to hinder the duke, who was no apt pupil of Caracal, from giving the rose to Helia.

"You lack nerve!" Caracal whispered in his ear.

"It will come!" answered monseigneur.

"I see the duke and Caracal," Helia said to herself; "but Phil is not here! It 's not very nice of him."

The public was coming in. The equestrienne left off rehearsing, with her hat over one ear.

"Come, we have to get ready," said Helia. "Au revoir, messieurs!"

The benches were filling up. Against the dark shadows of the boxes fans waved to and fro. The duke straightened up in the respectful space which his title of monseigneur left around him. Near him was Cemetery, the clown, waiting for Helia, whom he was to accompany in the ring. He shook the yellow tresses of his wig and groaned constantly, complaining of his aches and speaking of a return to his box to rub himself with camphorated alcohol.

"Do you want me to go with you—I 'll rub you!" the duke said, Parisian to the finger-tips, and hoping, if he rubbed the old clown's spine, that he would redeem in Caracal's eyes the rose given to Sœurette.

"No, thank you, monseigneur. There is nothing to be done," said the old clown; "I, too, was famous, and now I 'm only an old dog—ah!"

But no one listened to him.

The show began. In the ring the blond hair and doll face of Louise Bingel whirled to the music of the orchestra, as she leaned over to apply the whip to her horse's neck with many a "Go!" and "Up!"

The public talked as it looked through the program. The real show was to come later. It was not the "Gallinaro Family, somersaults, bravourturnerin, tapis-tumblers," nor "Miss Soho, the world's greatest I-don't-know-what," nor "Princess Colibri and her Prince-Consort"—no! that which attracted the public was, first and foremost, Helia. Discreet notes in the papers had given hopes that there would be something "never seen before." Some said she was a young girl of good family, whom an irresistible vocation had drawn to the circus. Details, too, were given of her career—in contradiction with one another, of course.

What was not known, though, was how Helia had been working for months. She was going to try a daring feat. Even the costume was to be new. To her the nudity of the maillot seemed brutal.

"Beauty is well, talent is better!" Cemetery, her professor in other days, used to say; and she wished to be applauded for her art and not for her beauty.



Cemetery



Her wonderful gymnastic knowledge gave her the right to attempt the feat.

She thought in gestures. She had in her the inborn love of grace and physical force. With graceful movement she summed up a thousand things which she could not have said; and she had the idea of reviving the acrobatics of the ancients, just as others have reconstructed the songs of old times, and the dance through the ages. One day at the Louvre she had seen on a Greek vase an artistic dance which struck her. She had spoken of it to Phil while posing for Morgana—for Helia saw Phil often.

In spite of all, she loved to be near him, and though Phil might forget, on her side she felt her love for him only increase. She was one of those proud hearts which love but once. In spite of all, she believed in the sacredness of a sworn promise. Phil would come back to her! Besides, Phil was a precious help in the work she was undertaking. Together they consulted the "*Recherches Historiques et Critiques sur les Mimes et Pantomimes du Seigneur de Rivery.*" Her head was full of neurobatie, scheunobatie, and acrobatie. She dreamed of gymnastics and the dance. She studied her movements in Phil's studio, in the evening, after his work.

He had a jointed lay-figure which she put in the proper poses, seeking for effects in its curving and bending back. She cut out little costumes and tried them on it. She went to the Library, and looked through the boxes of the booksellers along the Quais. The instinct of the beautiful guided her. She composed her number as she might compose a poem.

The reverse of a Roman medal and an old engraving representing the Genoese who descended the towers of Notre Dame, torch in hand, to offer a crown to Queen Isabeau suggested ideas to her. A biography of Madame Saqui, who was called the first acrobat of the empire, and whom Napoleon entitled *mon enragée*, was very useful to her.

"Plato," Phil said to her one day when they were studying together, "Plato contends that gymnastics give grace to the movements of the body, of which we ought to think even before adorning the mind."

"Plato is wrong," was Helia's answer.

But she proved that he was right by the moral energy which physical training had developed in her. For months she studied without let-up, mastering rebellious muscles, beginning again, twenty times over, the same thing, setting to work with all her heart and all her courage, with clenched teeth and eyes shining with the pride of will. There was despair in her mad energy.

"But you will kill yourself, Helia," Phil said to her.

"Nonsense!" said Helia. "I will die or do it!"

"In other days," she thought in her simplicity, "Phil did not like to hear me speaking of my trade; but who knows?—he may change if I become a *grande artiste*."

That evening she was to present to the public the outcome of her efforts.

Suzanne, in the dress of a pretty little Pierrette, was already in the ring. With her usual go she was showing off trained rabbits. They jumped through

hoops, climbed up on her, and ate seeds from her hand. It made a little interlude before Helia's number.

At the entrance of the stables clowns and firemen, reporters and men of sport made up a guard of honor. There was even an impresario from New York, who spoke to Suzanne when she came out.

"Brava, mademoiselle! Ah! if you only knew how to sing!"

"If I only knew how to sing!—*Je t'écoute!*"

"Brava! brava! You 'll have a success in New York! You 'll come on the stage, they 'll ask you if you know how to sing—and you 'll answer—how was it you said it?"

"*Je t'écoute* [I hear you]."

"That 's it! You must also bring in a little can-can—do you know how to dance?"

"There 's a question for you!" And with the point of her elegant foot Suzanne, scarcely seeming to touch it, sent the shining silk hat of the impresario rolling on the ground.

"Brava! Perfect!" the impresario cried in an ecstasy of joy. "I 've found what I 'm looking for—a typical French girl!"

There was silence. In the luminous void of the circus, high up in the air there were shining things in nickel—trapezes—and a rope was stretched down to the ring.

The orchestra burst forth. Helia kissed Sœurette and passed out with a run before the duke and Caracal. Her mantle, left hanging as if by chance, gave a glimpse of a rosy shoulder. On the threshold of the

ring she stopped and threw off the mantle. It was like the unveiling of a statue.

She wore the short tunic of the dancers of Pergamus. The clinging stuff was fastened at the shoulder and hung to a point on each side, leaving arms and neck and the upper part of the breast uncovered; a light skirt fell straight to the ankles.

Helia looked at the public long enough to smile and bow. Then, with a quick spring, she leaped to the tightly stretched rope, and with agile bare feet climbed up its incline to the platform in front of her trapeze. The light brought out the whiteness of her skin and her red cheeks, and glittered back from a little star-shaped jewel in the black hair above her forehead.

There was a murmur of sympathy. The public applauded and cried: "Brava!" Helia had done nothing yet, but the audience was already won. The orchestra, after a moment's silence, suddenly broke forth and Helia began.

At first, to accustom the public to the notion of the movements, she leaped upright on the trapeze, which swung over to the platform. This had been foreseen. The three trapezes in their swing almost touched each other. They were hung from light steel tubes and oscillated like a single mechanism, without break or twist.

Helia, with infinite grace, went through a few exercises. It was the Waking of the Goddess—the first astonished gestures of a statue called to life by the inspiration of a Pygmalion. Then she let herself fall

as if overcome by dizziness, grasped the bar as she slipped down without apparent shock, and—almost before the folds of her gown could fall back gracefully—she was again on the trapeze, magnificent and at her ease. She balanced herself gently and gave a backward leap to the platform.

The public broke forth in applause. It felt itself in the presence of a healthy and robust art. This was no acrobat limited to one single task, with legs heavy by dint of walking on the ball, or shoulders by walking on the hands. But here was the accomplished gymnast—the all-round artiste, with her muscles obedient and supple. In her they acclaimed the poetry of the body and the melody of movement.

To give Helia a moment's rest, Cemetery entered, stumbled at the entrance of the ring, fell on his nose, rolled over, and pulled himself up by the rope. His pantomime expressed delight and fear at the spectacle, high above him, of this creature of light and beauty. His pursed-up mouth and rounded eyes had the look of weeping. He walked out scratching his wig.

The public laughed.

Helia made a sign and looked to the trapezes oscillating. Suddenly, to a joyous strain, she leaped forward. The orchestra seemed to uphold her in her flight. Nothing could be more graceful than the pose of her skirt, which fluttered from her ankles like a pair of wings. Then Helia leaped to the second trapeze just as the two bars almost touched. Her hand grasped the steel tube with a sudden effort, which

her art concealed. Then, letting go, she continued her dizzy balancing and leaped to the third trapeze, as calm as Fortune on her Wheel. She had crossed the entire space of the circus at a single flight and fallen upright on the other platform just as a wingless Victory finds rest on the pediment of a temple.

"Hurrah! Brava! brava!"

Helia cast a look of triumph on the crowd.

"What an artiste!" the duke murmured. Could this really be she who but a moment ago was talking like any comrade—this prodigy who was holding the hall enthralled, and bringing in a crush to the door all the stable crowd and artistes, gentlemen in evening dress, and the whole tumult of clowns?

Sœurette looked at her "big sister" in wonder and delight, while her lips seemed to murmur a prayer. Cemetery entered the ring again to proclaim the distress of man and his unrealizable desires. He jumped up to the rope, climbed a yard or two, and fell back flat on the ground. *Poum!* Come on! the goddess seemed to say to him. He tried again, but from the height of his Olympus the leader of the orchestra thundered him down with a stroke of the bass-drum, and he fell again—*poum!*—remaining on his back with his four limbs wriggling in the air. Then he dragged himself away, broken and bruised, with halting leg and rubbing his shoulder, while above him Helia appeared as an apparition, a shining form rid of the heaviness of the flesh.

Her art astonished the public. There was no perceptible effort,—*Jarret lâchés*, high leaps, whirls,—there



At the Circus

was nothing of all that. She gave the sensation of the "something never seen before." Merely by the way in which she touched her trapeze with the point of her bare feet, one felt that she was free from rules—inventive, a genius. It was youth and beauty, scorn of danger, and courage holding spellbound the crowd below her.

Her artistic intelligence profited even by obstacles. Thus Helia disdained the net; but the law imposed it. She found a means of making it serve her own purposes.

Just as she was ending, a globe was passed up to her, and she placed it on the bar. Then she stood upright on it, in the vast oscillations of the trapeze. She was like a goddess soaring in space with the earth under her feet.

Then Helia stopped motionless.

The orchestra ceased; the lights were extinguished; and suddenly, like a star falling in the night, Helia fell down to the net.

There was a moment's anguish, and then the lights and orchestra—lightning and thunder—began again, as in a storm. Helia was on the ground, offering, with a gesture, her heart to the crowd.

She was called back again and again. Bouquets were thrown to her—the public would have her out once more! At last she retired, worn out, and, putting off her stage-smile, she shook hands all round.

"There 'll be no bouquets left for the marquesa," Suzanne said. "But her horse may be accustomed, by this time, to the bravos!"

"You must be tired, Mademoiselle Helia?" the duke asked.

"It 's my trade," said Helia. "We smile to the public all the same; it would not be nice to show that it is work!"

And, with a gracious salutation to the duke, she went back to her dressing-room.

"You have n't invited her to supper!" Caracal remarked to the duke, when she had gone.

"I did n't think of it!"

"Are you going to wait till she comes down?"

"No," said the duke, intimidated. "I shall see her later, I hope. Your valet must attend to it. Let 's go now. There 's nothing to see after Helia!"

CHAPTER III

PHIL, CHAMPION OF MISS ROWLER

“I ’LL send her some flowers to-morrow,” the duke said, once they were outside.

“Monseigneur,” replied Caracal, “allow me to tell you, you ’ve been below the mark all through!”

“That ’s so!” agreed monseigneur.

“For a reigning duke,” Caracal went on, “a grand seigneur, a Parisian in soul, to have such timidity! It was worth while dining at impossible hours and passing evenings with a rheumatic clown, to wind up in nothing!”

“I shall have my revenge!” the duke said. “This evening I did not—dare.”

“And the reason is this,” Caracal continued: “you ’re in love with Helia!”

“I!”

“Yes, monseigneur.”

“What an idea!”

Just then Caracal passed into the two-colored light of an apothecary’s shop, red on one side and green on the other; his single eye-glass darted a fantastic reflection on the duke. He might have been twin brother to Mephistopheles.

"What a devil of a man!" thought the duke; "you can hide nothing from him. He might easily be right!"

Caracal had not astonished him. In love? Perhaps he was, since others were noticing it. It is true that Caracal was not exactly "others," powerful psychologist and searcher of hearts and brains as he was. But even Caracal would have to confess himself beaten by a Duke of Morgania parading with a circus star—that would be Parisian enough! He would no longer accuse him of inheriting the prejudices of Morgania, nor of believing in the predictions of the mad old witch!

The duke blushed at his own scruples. He envied Caracal's effrontery.

"It is true," he said to himself, "I have been below the mark all through. For a grand seigneur like me to be as timid as a college-boy is absurd. Helia ought to be for me simply an episode—a pastime—and nothing more."

All these ideas had come to him while he was lighting his cigarette, and Caracal, red and green, was darting on him the reflection of his monocle.

"In love with Helia?" the duke said aloud, flattered that Caracal had such an opinion of him, "*ma foi*, why not?"

"You are quite right," answered Caracal. "It will increase your prestige. Besides, you 'll see her at supper. My valet will hand her the invitation. Helia would rather go off alone, but she will come with us. Phil will be of the party, too!"

"Well, come along! We have an hour to wait. Let 's go in somewhere," said the duke.

They were just coming into the Place Blanche. A café, through its open doors, wrapped them round with the smell of alcohol. Before them a red-winged mill seemed grinding fire and flame. Beyond, streets went climbing up Montmartre, mountain of guano. Right and left, along the Boulevard, incredible dens held out their blazing signs in line, like the "Mene, mene, tekél, upharsin" of monstrous nights.

"Here is a cabaret artistique; let 's go in," said Caracal; "it 's immense!"

"Come on!" assented the duke.

The atmosphere, as of a den of animals, caught them by the throat. The conversations were deafening, but the voice of the proprietor rose above the clamor. He welcomed visitors, even ladies, with a torrent of insults. It was the height of chic to receive his avalanche of insolence with a smiling face.

"What do these two carrion come for?" he cried, pointing to Caracal and the duke, who, in his surprise, was on the point of getting angry, to the great joy of the public.

"Let 's sit in this corner; we can talk better," Caracal said to him, as much at his ease in this asphyxiating air as a fish in water. They sat down and the brutal voice and the clamors of the public found occupation elsewhere.

"Talk?" asked the duke. "What in the world should we talk about here?"

"About Helia," answered Caracal; "here 's to your

amours, monseigneur!" And he raised the glass which a waiter, dressed like an Academician, had brought him.

"Caracal!" said the duke, laughing, "we no longer live in the times when kings espoused shepherdesses."

"But dukes, monseigneur, still pay their court to danseuses," Caracal went on. "It 's a tendency of the aristocracy."

"Why?" asked the duke.

"Because the common run of men, when they court a woman, make account of what others think of her; whereas a grand seigneur doesn't care for the opinion of the public and chooses what pleases him."

"That 's true!" said the duke.

"I can cite you a dozen examples," Caracal continued. "There 's Clotilde Loisset, the circus-rider, who is an Hungarian princess to-day; Chelli, the danseuse, married to a Russian count who is Minister of State; Lord Billy, betrothed to an equilibrist; the Countess of Landsfeldt, Baroness Rosenthal— you know well who they were. And you see what they are now, thanks to the caprice of some Highness! Grandees, monseigneur, are like those kings who acknowledge no rank but that which they themselves create."

"Well said, Caracal!"

The duke, when his first surprise had passed, found it amusing to talk confidentially in such a moral pigeon. It was so amusing, even, that he forgot to ask himself what possible interest Caracal could have to see him in love with Helia.

"Will you come now, Caracal? Phil must be waiting for us."

"Helia, too!" said Caracal.

They left the place.

"We are leaving just as it is becoming interesting," Caracal sighed. "It's over there we are to meet," he added, pointing to the terrace of a café inundated with light.

They had not gone twenty steps before a voice called to them. It was Phil's.

"Good evening, Monsieur le Duc! Good evening, M. Caracal!"

"Good evening, Phil!" answered Caracal. "*Eh bien?* How's your American Club exposition? Interesting? Painting in the grand style? American painting, eh! eh! done by machinery, of course? I don't say that for you, *cher ami!*"

"And how is your novel, 'The House of Glass'?" retorted Phil, leaving painting for literature. "You were just now in search of human documents. Don't say no; I saw you! You're always thinking about it!"

"Always, my dear friend, always! But what makes you think so?"

"Because you were looking in the gutter," said Phil.

Caracal made a grimace; but when they got to the café his self-love had a satisfaction which brought back his smiles. Before the terrace, encumbered with people, his valet was awaiting him, telegrams in hand. This valet was a part of his pride of life; a good fellow employed in a shop all day long, and

free in the evening. Caracal dressed him up in a tail coat with gilt buttons, and a high hat, and had him bring his correspondence to the café every night, as if he were a man overwhelmed with invitations and billets-doux.

"Mademoiselle Helia will not come this evening," the valet announced.

"Why not?" Caracal asked, interrupting the reading of his despatches, which he had good reasons for knowing by heart.

"Mademoiselle Helia did not say why. Mademoiselle only said that she would not come. She has gone out with M. Socrate."

"Very well!" said Caracal, dismissing his valet.

"With Socrate! Poor Helia!" thought Phil.

"Well, messieurs, it will be less gay without a lady," Caracal observed; "but since we are here, let's do Montmartre, will you?"

"Come with us," said the duke.

So all three "did" Montmartre.

Caracal knew it all thoroughly. The cabaret was his home. He entered offhand; he had his own manner of opening the door and bidding a friendly good day to the proprietor amid the tables.

"There's Caracal!" These words, pronounced in the smoke of these little cafés by some *décadent* accompanied by a painted girl, swelled his heart with pride. Even the duke envied him this quasi-royalty which Paris confers on its elect.

Caracal loved the cabaret *rosses*, where some rickety little monsieur advances on the platform, opens

his snarling mouth and, hammering his words that not a syllable may be lost, narrates his little nastiness to the public.

"It 's a new school," Caracal explained. "Much more advanced than the *décadents*! It 's educating the public up to itself little by little. It has taken frankly for its flag the exact word in all its crudity."

"Say, rather, the dirty word," said Phil.

Wherever they went there was the same atmosphere of infection. You would have said that, camping in modern Paris, there was a *ville chaude* of the Middle Ages, where "*vérolez très prétieultx*" made high festival with ribald companions. The look of the places was repulsive. In one they were served by mock galley-slaves dragging their chains behind them. In another there were grave-diggers, and they sat by coffins, and green flames burned inside of skulls.

"You, fever-patient, what do you take?" the waiter said to the customer; "and you, consumptive? What do you drink, moribund?"

And then the fever-patient or the moribund—some ruddy young man from Scotland—would answer timidly: "*Oune bock.*"

"That gives a high idea of Paris," Phil said, as they went out. To him it all seemed stupid. What a contrast for him, after an evening passed with Ethel, were these pestiferous dives with their brute public, like pigs at the fattening! The pitiful sight recalled to him the weak-willed days of the past, the evenings at the Deux Magots, the masterpieces drawn in pencil on café tables and wiped off with a rag.

Caracal made a study of the different cabarets, preferring this one to that and drawing a dilettante's distinctions between their poets and singers.

"Such an one enunciates well. Have you heard his ballad of 'The Drunkard and the Rotting Dog'? That is art!"

And with an elegant gesture he fixed the monocle in his eye. Phil examined Caracal and tried to discern in his face the low instincts, the hatreds, the thumb-marks of degeneracy. He saw nothing but self-satisfaction.

They had arrived at The Pustule, the latest *cabaret artistique*.

"Let 's go in!" Caracal proposed. "It shall be the last."

"I shall leave you afterward," said Phil.

They entered. A blonde girl, with a thin, colorless voice and childish gestures and little smirks, was singing:

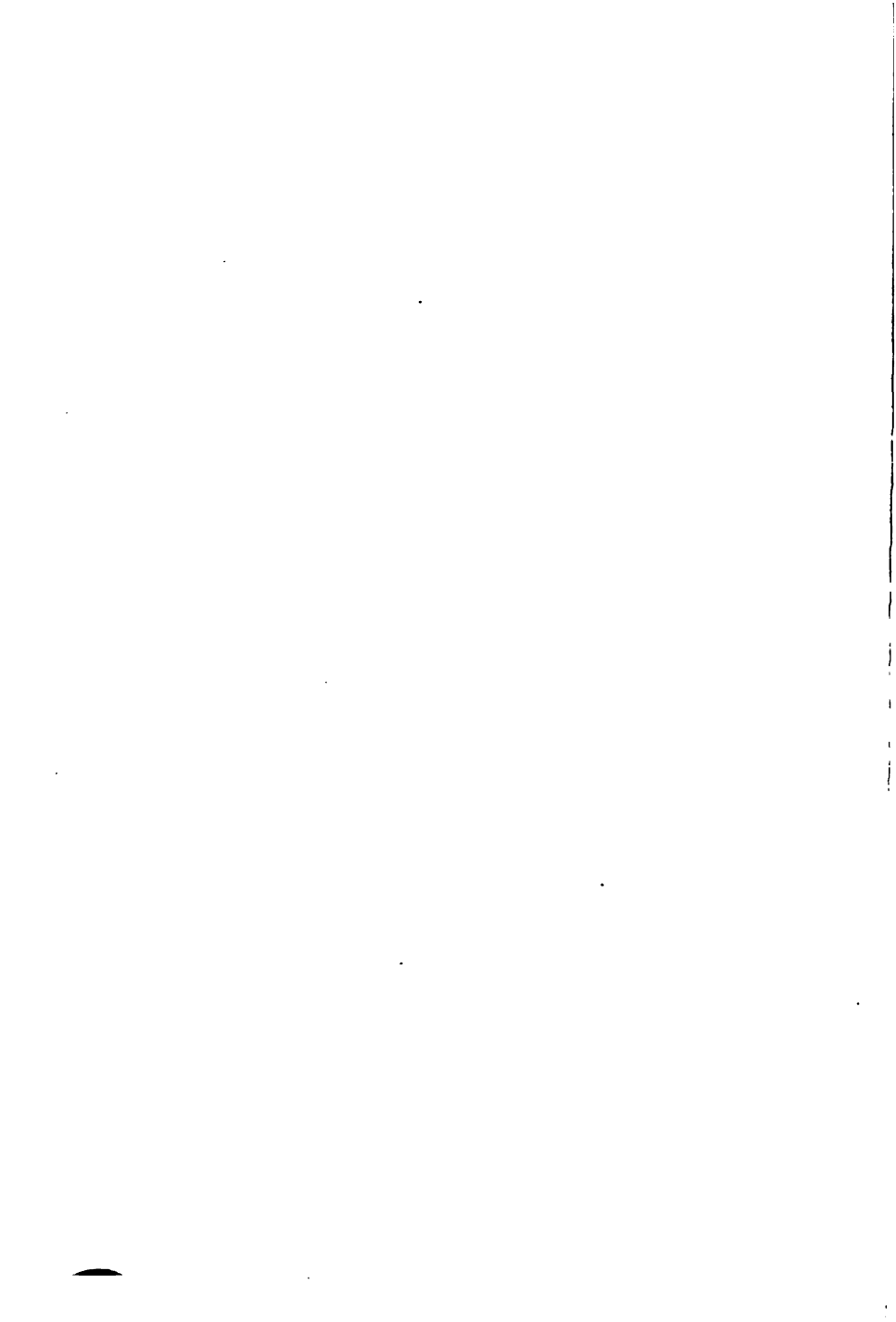
"Les bosquets du Bois d'Boulogne
Ous' qu on fait Zizi pan pan!"

Her place was taken by a *chansonnier rosse*, fat and bald. This one began at once, in an aggressive tone, a political satire. What? there was a couplet against Americans—Richard the Lion-hearted again, and then a direct allusion to a certain American miss—in this sewer!

Phil rose up, pale with anger. He would have smashed things, and shut the mouth of the fat brute bellowing on the stage; but suddenly he thought that



“Phil rose up, pale with anger”



he might compromise Miss Rowrer. He sat down, clenching his fist.

"I 'd like to know who writes such infamous songs!" he said to Caracal.

"Bah, never mind! Calm yourself!" Caracal answered, with sudden uneasiness. "Never mind; it 's not worth while. No one understands!"

"What a set of fools!" Phil went on. "I 'm going away; I choke here!"

"We 'll go with you," added the Duke of Morgania.

A moment later Phil took his leave of the duke and Caracal, to return home. From the other side of the street he saw Caracal gesticulating and explaining modern art to the duke. Fragmentary sentences reached his ear: "*Chansonniers rosses*—off with all masks—the future of poetry—poetry *voyez-vous*—just like the rose, sprouts from the dunghill."

CHAPTER IV

'TWIXT DOG AND POET

PHIL went his way, leaving the duke and Caracal behind him.

He was angry with himself for having come. Especially he was frightened at the feeling which had just been urging him to punish the singer on the stage. There was something more in it than the natural indignation of an upright heart in presence of a low action. He felt it a hundred times more than he would have done for a personal insult. He stood forth revealed to himself as the champion of Miss Rowrer.

On the whole, the verses were stupid rather than malignant; but it had been stronger than he—an explosion, in a way, of a growing passion. He resolved to stop short on this dangerous descent and not allow himself to be lured on by an impossible love, the very thought of which seemed to him worthy of blame.

Phil was not content with his evening, so well begun and so ill ended.

"They 'll not catch me again doing Montmartre with Caracal and the duke," he said to himself. "I was wrong to go there to-night. I have become certain that Helia is letting herself be courted by Socrate. To have

come down like that—she whom I knew so reserved and sweet! And I know something else, too. I have to stop flirting with Miss Rowrer—perhaps even stop seeing her, poor fool that I am!”

And Phil went his way with lowered head, absorbed in his own reflections.

Phil’s idea was right so far as Miss Rowrer was concerned. He might really have been in danger. But he was mistaken in his appreciation of Helia, for she had not quit the circus with Socrate. Socrate had followed her, that was all—Suzanne having taken away Sœurette immediately after the departure of the duke and Caracal. Helia, worn out with fatigue, went away much later on the arm of old Cemetery.

She was full of deference for the man who had made her an artiste, and she accompanied him back to his hotel. Socrate walked alongside, without the least emotion at the sight of this Antigone protecting her Œdipus; rather, he was furious that she should lose her time with such a doddard; but he had nothing to say about it! Helia would not have understood, and Socrate remembered spitefully that the duke and Caracal were cooling their heels in vain expectation of her.

Afterward Socrate saw her home. He had so many things to say to her—things he dared not utter.

However, at the moment of taking leave he expressed a wish to go in, in order to speak more freely.

“No, thank you!” said Helia; “you would wake Sœurette, who is already in bed.”

“But—”

"Besides, you have your own work." And she shut the door in his face.

Socrate, in a rage, remained outside. What he could not say this evening he would say to-morrow; so be it! But that he—Socrate, poet, thinker, painter, sculptor, and musician—should be so treated by this little moun-tebank—what a humiliation! He felt that he wanted to break something. A wandering dog passed by, and with all his strength he gave him a kick in the ribs.

"There, put that in your pocket!"

"And you take that!" And Socrate received a heavy blow, with which he rolled to the ground.

It seemed to him as he fell that he flung out his arms to protect himself, and that his fist came in contact with a head. When he was stretched out on the pavement he saw standing on the curbstone a man, motionless and looking at him. They were both in the light of a street-lamp. Suddenly Socrate recognized Phil.

In fact, Phil had been coming down the street just as Socrate kicked the poor animal. In his indignation Phil punished the brute, and then immediately recognized in him Socrate, who, of course, so he thought, was coming from Helia.

Socrate would have jumped on Phil, but he had neither knife nor revolver. So he remained on the pavement, crazy with impotent rage. Phil, remaining calm, picked up his hat, which had fallen in the scuffle. He waited. But as the thinker contented himself with groaning, he went his way without even a look behind.

"Helia! Helia!" he thought within himself, "that you should receive such a creature!"



"Suddenly Socrate recognized Phil"

CHAPTER V

LITTLE SISTER OF A STAR

THE next day Helia was still sleeping when Sœur-ette aroused her. The little one was trotting along the carpet in her bare feet, talking and laughing to herself in the sunny room. It was her great happiness in the morning to be up first and take her big sister by surprise. She climbed on the bed and awoke her with a good kiss on the cheek.

"Ah, how you frightened me!" cried Helia, pretending fear.

Sœur-ette burst into laughter.

"Let me lie beside you; I'll let you sleep!"

"Are you sleeping?" the little one asked a moment later. "Ah, you see, you're not sleeping. *Eh bien!* tell me a story!"

"You know," replied Helia, "if you're not good you sha'n't do the trapeze to-day."

This threat quieted Sœur-ette.

Helia did not wish to make a gymnast of her. Ah, no! She dreamed of other things for her—anything except that! But she had taught her a few turns to develop her, and the little girl took the greatest pleasure in it.

Soon, won by the warmth of the bed, Sœurette fell asleep. Helia arose gently and finished waking herself with an invigorating bath in cold water. Then she put on her great peignoir, tying the girdle around her waist. To keep herself supple she went through two or three of her flections, bending herself backward, forward, turning her bust on her haunches, breathing again and again long and deep. The sleeves of her peignoir flew loose as she raised her arms, like a statuette from Tanagra come to life.

Then she finished dressing, for she hated wrappers, in which the body grows soft. She put on her apron, and made tea in the samovar which Phil had given her, just as he had given Suzanne a splendid salad-bowl. Tea was Helia's triumph, as Suzanne's was salad; there was no disputing it!

The concierge brought up the fresh bread, the butter, and buns; and she cut her *tartines* thinking of other things. She would put aside savings for Sœurette. She would teach her; have her taught the piano—she scarcely knew what—but not her own trade! The beginnings were too hard; yet if it had not been for her profession would she ever have known Phil? It would have been better not, perhaps; who knows? She owed him great joy—and grief as well! To think that he had not come to see her first night at the *Cirque*!

The idea came to her that she might never live out her love-romance to the end, and her heart swelled within her. But with a gesture she put away these haunting thoughts, and finished preparing the bread and butter. When the breakfast was ready she awoke her little sister.

"Up, and quickly, dear one! the tea is ready!"

Sœurette jumped from the bed, stuck her little feet into her big sister's slippers, and did not linger playing on the carpet.

Seated on a chair made higher by a great book which she would go to turning over presently, she already had her nose in her cup. Her favorite doll, Glanrhyd, was at Phil's studio; he was to repaint the face, which had been damaged by a fall. Other dolls were lying on the floor, but they were not Glanrhyd! Glanrhyd had been given her by Helia, who had cherished it ever since her own childhood. In spite of its absence, Sœurette was greatly preoccupied with her bread and butter and tea. She had scarcely the time to smile at her big sister and ask her questions.

"What is that—that medal?"

Helia had just been taking out of her trunk and hanging on the wall mementos of her life, to which she was much attached. Her little sister was not acquainted with these objects.

"And that, and that?" Sœurette ran on, pointing to a gilt-paper wreath, to a group of gymnasts with Helia in the foreground, to still other things.

"And that?" she added, pointing to the photograph of a young girl seated on a kind of throne with a young man at her feet.

"It 's you and Phil!" Sœurette remarked.

"That might be," answered Helia. "Eat in peace, and keep quiet!"

"No; tell me first what that is?" Sœurette asked, pointing to another photograph. "Barracks in a garden?"

"It 's not barracks, Sœurette; it 's the palace of the Duchess of Glanrhyd, near London."

"Is it the doll's palace?"

"No," Helia said; "but the duchess gave me the doll."

"Do you know the duchess?"

"When I was in England long ago I played in her park at a benefit for the Society for the Protection of Children and Prevention of Cruelty to the Weak."

"Oh, what is that, tell me—the protection of children?" Sœurette demanded.

"I can't explain to you; you would not understand."

Helia looked at the photograph and remembered the day. "I will send you a pretty present," the duchess had said to her, caressing her with her gloved hand. And, in fact, to Kennington Avenue, where Helia was then living with Cemetery, they brought her a magnificent doll and pounds of bonbons; but Helia enjoyed neither them nor the doll.

"It will fatten you!" Cemetery said, as he locked up the bonbons. "There is no strength in them." He put the doll in a cupboard, adding: "You have no time to play, either, except on Sunday. Come, to work!"

"Say, big sister," asked Sœurette, who was finishing her bun, "what is cruelty to children? And is there cruelty to big persons? Tell me!"

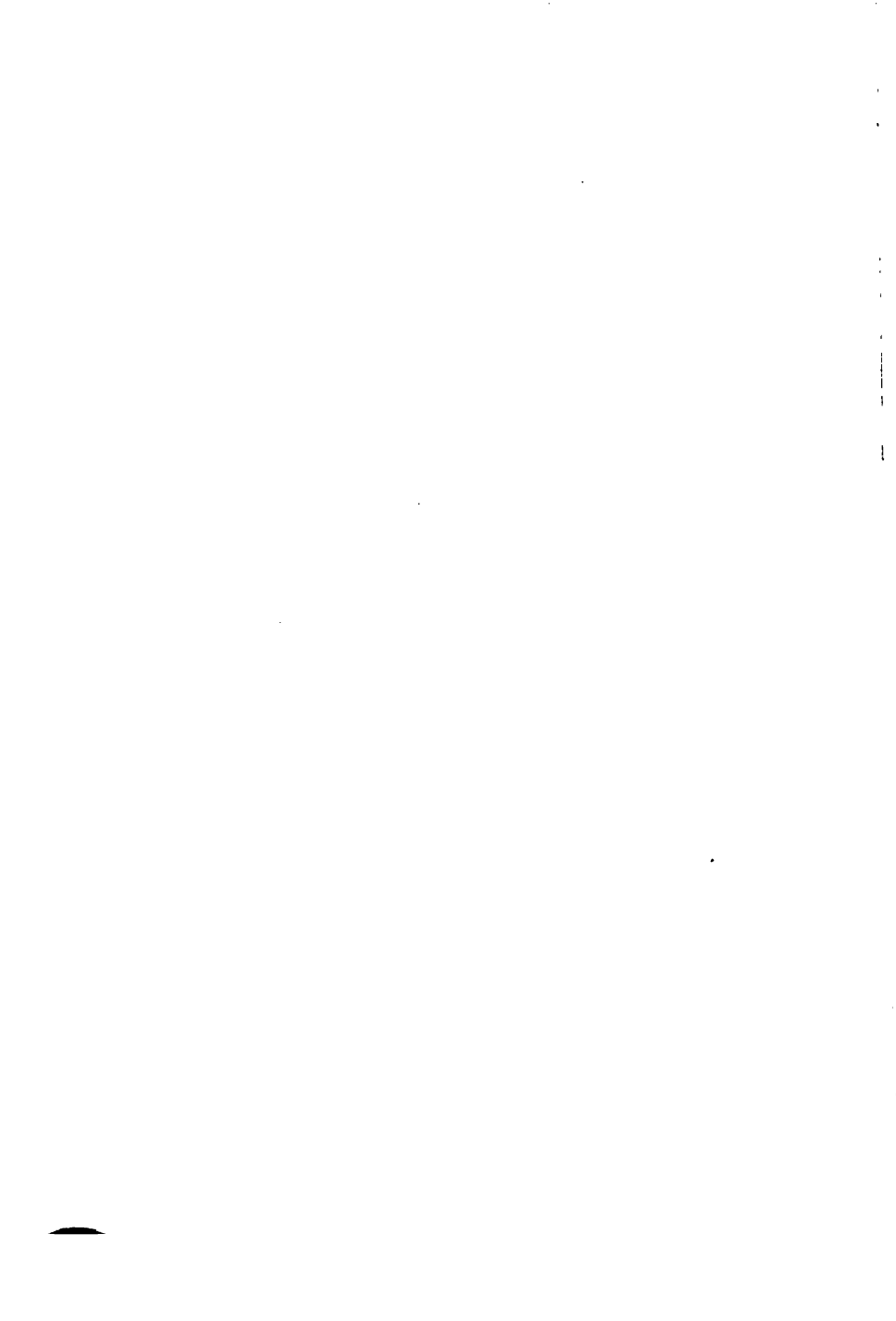
"Come and kiss me. You will know later on; and now, go and play!"

"Say, big sister, Glanrhyd does n't come back. Must I write to her?"

"Write if you wish, darling."



“To whom shall I write?”



This was quite an affair. Sœurette prepared her table behind a screen in the "doll's room"; but the paper was too large—Glanrhyd would never be able to read it. Helia had to cut it down to the proper size. At last, having got seated, Sœurette, by way of introduction, stuck out her tongue, rolled her head from right to left, and began.

"Well, Sœurette is busy," Helia said to herself. "She will leave me a little peace."

"Say, big sister, does a doll answer?"

"I don't think so," said Helia.

"Will Monsieur Phil answer?" Sœurette asked.

"Let Monsieur Phil alone. He has something else to do!"

"But, big sister, it used to be always Phil here and Phil there; you were n't afraid to speak of him!"

"Well, I won't have it!" Helia replied after a moment's silence.

"Why?"

"Because—"

"To whom shall I write, then?"

"I don't know, my darling."

Sœurette reflected for a moment, biting her penholder.

"How do you write 'Little Jesus'—say? Is it one word or two words?"

"Good!" thought Helia. "Now she's writing to the Little Jesus."

But some one came to divert their attention. There was a knock at the door, and Socrate came in with a cheek red and limping slightly.

Helia asked what was the matter.

"Oh, last evening, after leaving you, I had a fall. It is nothing," Socrate hastened to say, not wishing to tell of his affair with Phil; and for a good reason.

"You must have hit something hard," Helia said.

"Oh!" Socrate went on, in a rage at his red cheek and limping leg, "oh, why are you always spoiling that little girl? Cakes and dolls! Cakes only fatten her, and dolls are good only for Sunday!"

Helia was struck by the remark which brought back word for word Cemetery's observations. It was of no importance, of course; it was one of Socrate's jokes—the proof was that he was smiling. But it displeased Helia, who had become very reserved with him, and distrusted him a little. She esteemed him only for the nature of his work. It seemed to Helia that by taking interest in an "intelligence" she redeemed in some way the roughness of her trade as a gymnast. She raised herself in her own eyes. So she helped Socrate, half through charity and half out of pride.

Socrate, knowing Helia's goodness, looked forward to the time when he should have supplanted in her heart the remembrance of Phil. But he soon discovered Helia's real feelings, and was all the angrier because he had to hide his wrath. When he described to her the plan of his next poem, or the picture that he was always "going to do," he was thinking all the while of other things than his pictures and poems.

What! He was not to be the husband of Helia? She was to marry some one else? And he, Socrate, would not have the signing of contracts with her direc-

tors, the discussing of prices, and the pocketing of the money? Some one else was to enjoy all that?

What a pleasant life his would be if he should marry Helia! Oh, it was very simple. First of all, he 'd set Sœurette to work, steady! They might give her bonbons and dolls; they would all go under lock and key, and then—to work! In the morning, while he would go to the café and take his eye-opener, Helia and the little one would do their dumb-bells, to get under way for rehearsal. And then—*ouste!*—three hours' exercise in the morning, and three in the afternoon. Then he would show what was in him! He would encourage with a gesture or threaten with a look; sometimes he might let fall a "Very good" for Helia, or "It does n't go; begin again!" for the little one. In his conception of himself as professor he had always a cigar between his teeth, diamond buttons on his cuffs turned up to the elbows, and all around him papers and notices talking of the glory of this wife of his—the star.

To think that he was not to be Helia's husband! The very idea made him turn over in his head all sorts of sinister projects.

Socrate tried to be friendly with Sœurette.

"Good day, Mlle. Princesse! Will you kiss me, Mlle. Princesse?"

"No!" Sœurette answered. "Your red cheek makes me afraid. You look like a boggy man!"

"Now, now, Sœurette!" Helia said. "Be polite, darling. M. Socrate fell down; it was n't his fault. Don't you know that poets walk along looking at the stars?"

"Not at the stars, but at one star, Mlle. Helia. You know the one I mean!"

"Now you are here, Socrate, you can do me a favor," Helia interrupted, not even listening to his compliments. "First, throw these letters for me into the waste-basket."

"Must I throw that of Mlle. la Princesse also? What is she writing there? Can I see?"

"No!" Sœurette answered.

"Is it a secret? Well, I won't insist," Socrate said, and straightway stretched his neck over the screen and read:

"To the Little Jesus: They say, Little Jesus, that up there in heaven you have a wonderful bazaar, with all the playthings which are in all the earth and some that are not. There is no doubt of it, Little Jesus, is there? Well, then, cure Glanrhyd and send me a little white dog—a curly one that barks. I'd like to have a doll dressed for her wedding, and a little china table service; and let it be pretty—very, very pretty!"

"A letter to Little Jesus?" Socrate thought to himself. "There's a letter which won't be delivered!"

Meanwhile Helia was reading her morning's mail. There was nothing new in it; she had received hundreds of such letters. "Mademoiselle, pardon me, if I dare—" "Mademoiselle, will you allow an admirer of your talent and your beauty—" And so on, and so forth.

Helia did not even read them through to the end. She blushed, not with shame, but with pity for such foolish adorers.

"Do they take me for a toy? Into the basket!" And she held out the letters to Socrate.

"Why, she is crazy!" Socrate thought. "All these letters—they 'd be magnificent for blackmailing!"

"You do wrong to destroy them!" Socrate said aloud. "Some of them are, perhaps; in earnest."

"How is that?" Helia said, looking at him. "What do you mean?"

"I—why—"

Helia's uprightness disarmed him. She would never understand anything! Was it possible to be so naïve? Socrate was exasperated by it.

"By dint of shutting yourself out from everybody, you 'll soon have no more friends," he said, trying to be insinuating. "Who knows if there 's not a letter from the duke there?"

"And what then?" Helia said, as she arose.

"He is, perhaps, your best friend," Socrate answered. "A powerful protector like him—"

"What!"

"Of course, next to Monsieur Phil," he went on, with the perspiration starting out on his forehead. "But Monsieur Phil is too busy! They say, even—" And Socrate hunted for a word with which to end his embarrassment, and he had to be inventive and prompt.

"What is it they say?" Helia asked.

"That he is going to marry."

Helia had too great a habit of controlling her nerves, too much mastery of herself, and too much pride, to show her pain. Socrate had not the pleasure of seeing her turn pale. She appeared to be taken up with Sœur-ette, in her corner.

"Of course," was Helia's reply. "And now do this

errand for me, will you, Socrate? Here is the money," she added, explaining what she wished. "Pay—and keep what 's left over."

She accompanied him to the door. Her limbs were trembling and she seemed to walk on cotton. There was a roaring in her ears. She turned and fell into a chair.

Phil was to marry! Everything seemed crumbling around her, her dreams for the future, her castles in Spain, burying her in their ruins. Ah, she could never recover from such a blow! In vain had she been long awaiting it; she would never have believed it possible that Phil, so gentle and good, would do her such harm! For him, too, she had, then, been but a toy! He had amused himself with her! He had sworn marriage to her, and because she was poor and needed to work,—at a trade which she had not chosen, oh, no!—because she earned her living in a circus, they had the right to look down on her! So she belonged to the public! They could buy a ticket at the door and talk love to her between the acts for a pastime, while oaths—yes, oaths taking Heaven for witness, the oaths which were sworn to her—did not count!

Helia pronounced the last words aloud in a tone of indignation. Sœurette looked up. She saw her big sister put her head in her hands and weep silently.

For some time she had found that her sister was no longer the same. Her child's memory recalled to her a Helia full of joy and talking always of Phil; a Helia who drew a circle with her pen at the end of her letters, after applying her lips to the spot; a Helia who told

her beautiful stories and played and danced her in her arms, which were so firm and gentle that she would have cast herself into them from a belfry with closed eyes.

Sœurette tried to understand. Her little brain divined something without knowing exactly what. First, they did not often see Monsieur Phil. He was always very kind to her, Monsieur Phil,—and yet every time her big sister saw him she was sad afterward. Why? Socrate, too, made Helia sad. She was in trouble when he went away. What had he been saying to her? And Phil, especially, what had he been doing to her big sister?

Helia raised her head. She was as worn out as after her most violent efforts. The suffering calmed her revolted pride. Sœurette saw her lie back in her chair and close her eyes as if to sleep. But Helia did not sleep. During those moments she saw again her entire life—the gloomy childhood in which she could count her happy days, and then her youth, in which Phil had loved her. Had she acted wrongly? What had she done that could displease him? Perhaps it was a mistake to keep on in her trade; but how was she to live? Phil was to have taken her out of it, and he had not done so. And she meanwhile had been so proud to be an artiste, believing that she would become his equal, poor fool that she had been! Yes, it must be that! Phil, the student, was her equal: the Phil who was now tasting glory was not. Then that other young girl had come, so beautiful and good and rich, everybody said; and surely amiable, and smelling of violets!

“No! no! no! It is not possible!” Helia murmured

as she sat upright in her chair. "No! I know Phil—he is a man! If he had done that, he would turn away his head when he sees me, or he would come to ask my forgiveness on his knees. But after the oath which he had sworn me, to act like that—without shame and without remorse—no! Socrate is lying!"

Sœurette said nothing. Her instinct told her that all this did not concern her; that her business was to keep quiet, and that big sisters have cares which she could not understand. But she saw that Helia was in trouble, in great trouble; and Sœurette wished to see her full of joy, as she had once been. Her good little heart had a touching inspiration. She drew a mark across her letter and ended it up as follows:

"Little Jesus, keep your playthings for the poor, but tell Phil to be good to my big sister, who used to play all the while and tell me stories. Make him to be not so wicked, for she cries often when she speaks about him. I put my kiss here for you, Little Jesus."

And Sœurette did as she had seen Helia do: before slipping the letter into the envelop she placed a kiss at the end of it, and made a circle with her pen all around the spot.

CHAPTER VI

THE OLD, OLD STORY

AN automobile, with Miss Rowrer's brother Will conducting it himself, was rolling slowly along. Will had just arrived from America, to rest in France from the worries of business. He had bought for his sister this magnificent "forty-horse-power" machine; and, with a chauffeur to indicate the way for him, he had the pleasure of taking Ethel and grandma for a ride through Paris. That day, on the seats behind him, there were his sister and grandma, and, facing them, the Duke of Morgania alone.

"Oh, there 's Monsieur Phil!" Miss Rowrer said, as the auto stopped at a crossing thronged with hucksters and good-wives in morning undress.

"Good day, Monsieur Phil!"

Phil was on the sidewalk, two steps from Miss Rowrer. He was in his studio dress, a short coat over his sweater. He had come out to buy something and was going home with a package done up in paper in his hand. Hearing his name, he raised his head, recognized Miss Rowrer, bowed, and then approached in visible embarrassment. The vizor of his cap ill concealed the eye which Socrate had chanced to blacken with his fist the night before.

"Our friend Phil does his own marketing," Ethel said, laughing. "He is right. I've heard from the Hon. Mr. Charley that nothing is equal to a good beefsteak as a plaster for a black eye."

"Well, I suppose I must tell you," said Phil, not wishing that Miss Rowrer should think he had fought with a lamp-post. "This is how it happened: I got it last night while punishing a rough fellow for ill-treating a poor dog."

"Really? Then get in here with us, I beg of you," said Ethel.

Phil excused himself,—his dress, his black eye.

"You're all right as you are," Ethel replied. "You'll really oblige me by coming with us"—and she seated him beside the duke.

"Your dress does n't trouble us, since it pleases you," she continued. "Be yourself, and look out at the world from the neck of a sweater—there'll always be people enough to look loftily over a choker. If I were a man I would always defend the weak and pay no attention to the rest. You're all right as you are, Monsieur Phil."

Phil listened to Ethel with intense satisfaction. The duke chatted with grandma. The good-fellowship which he saw growing up between Miss Rowrer and Phil did not bother him. It was only the ordinary relations between an American girl and boy—only the friendship of fellow country people. The duke had for Phil that distant regard which nobles by race have for professionals. To handle a tool, even such as the painter's brush or sculptor's chisel,—to do something with one's hands, be it even a masterpiece,—lowers a man some-



"He approached in visible embarrassment"

what in their consideration. Consequently Phil might defend strong or weak, or dog-martyrs, if it amused him—it was a matter of no importance. The duke gave himself up to the noble occupation of a cicerone of mark, who knew his Paris thoroughly; and, as they passed, he pointed out the monuments to grandma.

Phil, on his side, talked with Ethel *en camarade*, as the duke said. What a pleasure such talks were to him! Where were now his fine resolutions no longer to make himself the champion of Miss Rowrer, and even to stop seeing her? He drifted along under the charm of her words. From the day when, in the duke's company, he had first met her at the Comtesse de Donjeon's, he had become one of the faithful at her tea-parties. He often went to the Rue Servandoni; and, after the commission for the empress's portrait and Ethel's entrance as a pupil in his studio, they had had the most friendly relations.

Phil told her stories from bohemia that amused her. He narrated his adventures in the provinces, including the little Saint John, with his arrival in Paris and his visit to Poufaille and Suzanne; the "comrades," and Socrate, and the Deux-Magots; his reception at the studio; and the welcome on the model's table; and many other things besides. But he said little about Helia's stay in Paris when he was a student. For that matter, he thought of it seldom; his memory was a mist concerning it—it all seemed so far away to him.

With what pity he recalled the environment in which he had lived! There were all his chance friends. Suzanne, who was really good, and skeptical only because

she had seen too early the bad side of life. Poufaille was too simple; to have made an intimate friend of him would have been to tie a cannon-ball to one's leg. Charley was too much of a bluffer. As to Helia—ah, Helia! He was grateful to her from the bottom of his heart for the simple love which he had once had for her—a love whose remembrance had protected him all through his first years in Paris. For him it had been a romance, without reproach, candid and loyal, and not a passion that would follow him through life like a remorse. His romance—Phil was sure of it—had nothing in it that was not noble. Yes, Helia would always have a place apart in his heart; she would be a sweet memory. Forever, all through his life, she would be his friend and he would forever be a brother to her.

But time had passed. Helia herself had changed. He saw it clearly during her visit to him in his studio on the morrow of the Quat'z-Arts Ball. Ah, how far away were the days when she had been his sweetheart—how many things had passed since then! Now Ethel ruled in his life. He felt himself very little in her presence. For her he had the same admiration which Helia once had for him.

Miss Rowrer was the first society girl whom he had known; for he had led a solitary life in the Chesapeake manor, and in Europe his over-timidness had always held him socially aloof. During his years as a student he had neither opportunity nor leisure. It was only now that he began to understand the charm of the social world. The instincts of his good breeding were awakened. Life seemed beginning for him; he felt like a man back

from exile. Contact with Miss Rowrer refined him, and even his art was idealized. It was no longer physical beauty alone which attracted him: there was the moral side; for Ethel put character far above talent, and the two together above everything else.

After this automobile ride which his black eye had earned for him, others followed. Usually Will, the brother, was himself the conductor, as a matter of prudence. That intoxication of speed which gives weak minds the illusion of energy was unknown to him. Once, however, he got into the auto with them and allowed the mechanician to take charge. It was a day when Mme. de Grojean and Mlle. Yvonne, her daughter, had accepted the invitation to take a ride with them. After that Mlle. Yvonne and her mother returned to their province, so that the most part of the time Ethel and grandma had the company only of the duke or Phil, and now and then of M. Caracal.

They saw Auteuil and Chantilly, and took part in an automobile gymkhana for polo at the Bois de Boulogne. At the Longchamps races Miss Rowrer, like a great favorite, was the target of the field-glasses. It was there she met Charley, faultlessly correct, having stripped himself for the day of his bohemian clothes. Charley, who knew Ethel, passed in vain near her again and again to have her recognize him.

The automobilists were seen everywhere from Versailles to Vincennes. The trip around the world was too commonplace. They made the trip around Paris, passing its fifty-seven gates, past its ten railways, its two waterways, through its two forests and more than thirty quar-

tiers, which sum up the luxury and industries of all the cities of the world—London at La Râpée, Chicago at La Villette, Antwerp at the Canal de l'Oureq.

At St. Denis Caracal gave them the history of what they were seeing. He showed them the effigies of kings mutilated in the Revolution, at the time when Choisy-le-Roi changed its name to Choisy-sur-Seine and Montmorency to Etienne, since there were no longer kings or nobles—"two things they would have done better to keep," the duke observed.

"They would probably still be here if they had been worth keeping," answered Ethel.

They dined in a tree at Robinson and rode on donkeys at Romainville. The outings of Parisians in villages with charming names—Marne-la-Coquette, Fontenay-aux-Roses, Les Lilas—were pleasing to Ethel.

"Space opens up ideas! You will find it so, Monsieur le Duc, and you too, Phil, if you do us the pleasure to hunt the moose on our Canadian lands. How free one feels there—not a hedge, not a barrier between us and the north pole!"

Caracal, for his part, cared little about space. He regretted the days when the Boulevard was the only promenade. Tramways and railroads seemed to him high treason against Paris—something like an invasion of the coarse air of fields and woods into the artistic atmosphere of cafés.

"No, no!" Miss Rowrer answered. "Leave things as they are—a little pure air does no harm."

"To be sure!" said grandma.

Caracal refused to be consoled.

"If this goes on," he said, "Paris will soon be Paris no longer—that something indefinable and apart; that hothouse which has made us the neurasthenic and dislocated skipjacks that we are."

"Well, if that 's your manner of loving Paris!" Ethel said, laughing. "Really, you see things worse than they are!"

Caracal, perceiving he was on the wrong tack, stopped short.

"Just the contrary, you ought to be glad for something that is worth more than hygiene—moral health," Miss Rowrer continued. "Why should people stay piled together when there is so much empty space around? Tempers are embittered and bodies weakened. Give it space and air and your Paris will cease to be what you would wish it to remain—a hothouse full of dislocated skipjacks and *neurasthéniques*—such as our up-to-date people are, according to you."

"That 's a good one on Caracal," thought Phil to himself.

Will, who was not conducting the auto that day, interrupted Ethel. He spoke little, but he thought and then went straight to the point.

"Let us pardon Frenchmen because of Frenchwomen," he said.

"You are right, Will," replied Ethel. "I admire Frenchwomen—they seem so superior to the men; for among the men there are some so mean. Think of Vieillecloche printing such outrageous things in his newspaper! Really, in his place I should be ashamed of myself! Who is Vieillecloche, anyway?"

"He's a remarkable duelist," answered Caracal. "There are already five dead men in his trail."

"What a coward!" said Ethel. "I would wager that if he were hit with a check, he would apologize to us!"

"Oh, let him alone!" said Will. "He does us no harm—the barking dog does n't bite."

"He's annoying, all the same."

"If it were my own case I would silence him!" Caracal declared.

"But could you do it?" asked Ethel. "It would be very kind of you to do so. I can't go anywhere at all without hearing 'Richard the Lion-hearted' with smiles all around me. It haunts me. It almost spoils my stay in Paris. Can you rid me of it, Monsieur Caracal?"

"I shall do so!" declared Caracal.

"I thank you!" said Miss Rowrer.

Caracal had just had a bright thought. He knew his friend Vieillecloche would do whatever he wished, since the blackmailing scheme against the Rowrers had not succeeded and no check had come or would come to close his mouth. It would be just as well to look for something else. Caracal would have himself attacked—he would turn aside the storm to himself by taking up the defense of foreigners, to the apparent indignation of Vieillecloche. In this noble combat against calumny he would stand forth as a hero in the eyes of Ethel, like a St. George slaying the dragon. The duke and Phil would have to look out for themselves. He would know how to cover them with ridicule—them and their Helia—in some good little newspaper *chronique*, sweet as honey, which Ethel might read. For that matter, Phil had already a shot in

his wing—he would find it out in a few days and remember his cow painting!

“I will arrange all that this evening with Vieille-cloche,” thought Caracal. “I shall be well able to pay for a service like that if I marry Miss Ethel.” Then aloud: “I shall do so—you can count on me, Miss Rowrer!”

All this was but one of a thousand incidents of their trips.

“I have heard of *le dernier salon où l'on cause* [the last salon for conversation],” Ethel remarked. “I suppose it has disappeared, it is so long since people began talking about it. Well, our auto takes its place—it is the first auto *où l'on cause*.”

“When one listens to you, Miss Rowrer, one can say that wit runs the streets,” added Caracal, gallantly.

Every moment some new observation sprang, bringing out individual character.

For instance, a cab passed them noisily, the horse pounding along the street and the driver lashing him.

“What a noise!” Will said. “Why are people so obstinate with their hippomobiles? Why not put rubber on the wheels first, and then on the horses’ shoes?”

Will calculated the chances of a company to be organized for this purpose—so many horses in Europe, so many horseshoes rubbered, investment of capital so much, revenue so much.

“They are ’way behind,” said grandma. “What an idea, to be driven about in such dust-boxes!”

“What a picture to make!” said Phil. “That horse just now reared under the rein with a movement as

superb as any of the Parthenon. Behind him was that theatrical poster representing a woman with her hair floating—with her and the horse you might imagine a troupe of Amazons under the blue sky of Greece! Only artists can enjoy things. They know how to see!”

“The poor beast has lost a shoe, and the collar wounds him and the cabman lashes him,” Ethel interrupted. “Poor animal, it makes me ill to see him!”

Phil thought to himself, “That is what I ought to have seen!”

Apart from these excursions, he gave to Miss Rowrer, also, whatever leisure was left him by his great picture of Morgana. At her request, he accompanied her with Will and grandma in their visits to museums and to the shops where they wished to buy pictures of the masters for their palace on the Lake Shore Drive in Chicago.

Will had first visited the artists’ studios, thinking he would find there a world free from the atmosphere of business. But the landscape man tried to get him away from the portrait-painter, and professional jealousy showed its teeth. They tried to pass off their “old stock” on him; they spoke only of money. “For such a price I will do so and so.” “If it is larger it will be dearer.” “A landscape without trees is worth so much—with trees, twice as much!”

“If I ’ve got to talk business,” Will thought, “I ’d rather do it with business men”; and he left the artists alone.

He liked best to choose for himself at the Hôtel Drouot—that big collecting-sewer of art, rolling pell-mell in its dusty waves masterpieces and daubs. The sales-



Poufaille's Goods Ready for Auction

rooms, heaped from ceiling to floor, gave him the feeling that he might sometime make a discovery there like the cock who found pearls in a dunghill.

"What horrors!" Will said one day, as they were passing in front of a hall full of plaster statues and unframed paintings. "It must be from the studio of some poor devil whom they are selling out at auction."

There were casts from nature—arms and legs and feet; there were formless sketches, canvases hung on the wall; for some, it was impossible to see what they represented, as they had been hung head downward. There was a tub, some bottles, a few chairs, a mattress, and a rickety table, all heaped up in a corner. Two monstrous statues seemed to keep watch over the confusion. On the pedestal of one was inscribed "Liberty," and she raised arms and head furiously; the second, "Fraternity," lay on the ground in fragments, turning enormous haunches to the public.

"What are those mastodons there?" Will asked.

"That," said Phil, with surprise, "that must be from a sculptor whose name is Poufaille; yes, look at the sign over the door—*Vente Poufaille*."

"Poor Poufaille!" said Phil to himself; "he must have been unable to pay his rent—the landlord has come down on him. If I had known, I might have helped; but it is so long since I have seen him."

What he saw recalled the day when he entered the sculptor's place on his arrival in Paris. He remembered the gay laughter of Suzanne from the top of her ladder, and the pork fried with garlic. Those statues, those pictures worthy to figure in a collection of horrors,—how

much more ugly and more lamentable still it all seemed to him in the presence of the crowd of indifferent passers-by!

"Poufaille?" Ethel asked with interest. "Is it the Poufaille of whom you used to tell me? Why, he has no talent; he'd do better as a farmer."

The sale began and they heard the auctioneer above the confusion of the throng: "Magnificent statues—'Liberty'—'Fraternity'—give me a bid!"

"Forty sous!"

"Forty sous? There's half a ton of plaster there! Come, now, a higher bid!"

A silence, and then some one called, "Fifty sous!"

"Bid it up a thousand francs, Will!" Ethel said to her brother.

"Really, now, Ethel," Will answered, "even at fifty sous it's dear. I'll buy something else from M. Poufaille, some other time."

So many years of toil and want, and all his poor dreams of the future soon to be scattered and ground to mortar—yet Poufaille was right! He had followed his dream, he had tried his fortune; it had tumbled to the ground, but what a beautiful dream it had been all the same! And Phil thought, with a thrill at his heart, that there was one thing which justified every effort; one thing which broke down distinctions and made a poor artist the equal of a reigning duke, of a king even; something which would put him on a level with Ethel; something which he would reach, had he to kill himself in the struggle for it!

Ethel came up to Phil as they were going out of the hall.

"Tell me, Phil, what can induce a man like Poufaille to try art? Is n't it sheer folly?"

"No, Miss Rowrer. It is true Poufaille has not succeeded, but that matters little. He has tried to reach the only thing which makes life worth living."

"What is that, Phil?"

"Fame!"

CHAPTER VII

CARACAL'S NARROW ESCAPE

A BAS Caracal!"

"Vive Vieillecloche!"

Phil, who was reading a newspaper as he passed along, looked up with astonishment.

He was in front of the entrance of a music-hall. On a strip of cotton cloth he read, in huge letters, "PUNCH d'INDIGNATION!" The name of Vieillecloche was displayed everywhere, mingled with the flags which covered a good half of the theatrical posters of acrobats, jugglers, and clowns.

"The flag covers the goods!" Phil said, as he saw this assemblage of patriotism and fakery. "Vieillecloche is at his old tricks; what a humbug!"

Phil stopped. Confused imprecations against impostors and grafters came to his ears between the bang! bang! of the door, pushed one way or the other by the public and clanging back into its place.

Bang! "Vive Vieillecloche!"

Bang! "À bas!" Bang! "Traitors! Sold out!" Bang! "À bas Caracal!" Bang! bang!

"Hello!" said Phil. "'À bas Caracal'! What does that mean? I must go in."

He entered.

Bang! It was the door slamming after Phil. He had now a right to the indignation and to the punch.

To tell the truth, there was little indignation in the hall, but a great deal of drinking and still more laughter. The public was made up of the idlers of the quarter, who had come to be amused. There were stable-boys and grooms in their great wooden shoes. The hall was infected with the smell of rum and tobacco. The voices, which but now had reached Phil's ear in broken cries, rolled uninterruptedly. There was a continuous torrent of *à bas!* and *vive!* mingled with coarse wit and the clink of glasses. On the stage, mastering the tumult, Vieillecloche was speaking.

"Vive Vieillecloche!"

"Hear! hear!"

Bang!

The flights of oratory were lost amid the noise.

"Only yesterday," Vieillecloche was saying, as he raised his voice, "not satisfied with attacking the majesty of universal suffrage, forgetful of the famous night of the 13th of March, foreigners feared not to brave the lion-people in its den! They banded together to despoil us of our dead—to soil the majesty of the tomb where our great ancestors—" Bang! said the door, cutting the discourse, "—ancestors sleep their eternal sleep! Do you not hear, O people, beneath the earth Richard the Lion-hearted roaring with wrath and shame? And to think there are French pens that treat us as visionaries—us who point out such attacks—and that pretend that we are wanting in courtesy by accusing our passing guests

of an imaginary crime! This vile pen, citizens, I deliver it up to your indignant scorn. It is Caracal!"

"À bas Caracal!"

"Oho! I understand," Phil said to himself. "Caracal has taken up the defense of the foreigners, as he promised Miss Rowrer the other day."

"Eh bien!" Vieillecloche went on, "it shall not be said that Caracal has appealed in vain to our courtesy when he asks us to cease our political campaign against such foreigners, among whom there are ladies and even a young girl. We shall speak no more of Richard the Lion-hearted! All that is a blunder, a visionary's dream, a groundless accusation. So be it! They ask for definite facts and not for vague accusations. Here is a definite fact! I accuse, formally, an American of stealing our ideas and stifling under the power of his cursed gold the outburst of a young genius, the hope of our glorious national art. They come to pillage even in their calm retreats, and to deprive of their labor the sons of the soil—*les autochtones!*—hum!—*les autochtones!* (The word intoxicated Vieillecloche and he sent it bounding like a rubber ball.) "Yes, citizens! He has signed his work with a false name, he has picked the lock of our national museums, and, like a cuckoo, he has deposited in the bosom of glory the egg which he has not laid! And you suffer that, O people? Do you not feel the blush of shame mounting to your cheek? Take your clubs, Parisians—" and so he went on and on.

Vieillecloche in his haranguing embroidered his theme with violent gestures which sent the skirts of his coat flying around his thin body.



The Punch d'Indignation

Phil was not sorry to have come. The inventions of this crank amused him, most of all when the orator, rising to higher flights, brought out personal facts so as "to enter into the domain of practical things." Vieillecloche calmed down. The storm-tossed skirts of his coat fell. He was no longer the roaring tribune of the people: he was the statesman, speaking calmly and coolly. He held one hand between the buttons of his waistcoat, and the other behind his back, like Napoleon. To begin with, according to him, these facts would never have taken place if they had only listened to him.

A quarter of an hour of counsels followed, in which there were insurrections and barricades, blood and glory, and *à bas!* and *vive!*

"But if the sword remains in the scabbard," Vieillecloche concluded, "let the people, at least, console despoiled genius with their songs; let the old Gaulish gaiety inflict its avenging laugh on the robber of its glory!"

As Vieillecloche retired amid ironic applause, a long-haired poet came out on the platform and a hurdy-gurdy ground out despairingly such an air as goats dance to. Phil looked at the furious grinder and gave a cry of astonishment: "Poufaille!"

"What is Poufaille doing here? And why does he look so furious?" Phil asked himself, as he saw the sculptor's wrathful head leaning over the hurdy-gurdy whose crank he turned with rage.

Bing! bing!

"After all," thought Phil, "there is nothing strange in Poufaille being here. Artists belong to all sorts of provincial and Parisian societies, as if they were really

children of the soil, so as to get orders. He might as well grind out a tune at an indignation meeting as Suzanne do the Muse of the South at the Pig's-Rump Dinner."

Phil also knew that the "Poets of the Landes" or the "Broom-flower" were only too happy to make themselves heard by a Parisian public, and would not miss an occasion for avenging genius despoiled by cowards, and for declaiming in its honor to the accompaniment of a hurdy-gurdy or bagpipes.

So it was a very simple thing that Poufaille should have offered his services. Meanwhile Vieillecloche had sat down after many a handshake with the notabilities of the committee. It was now the turn of the poet.

The singer on the platform gesticulated to his Norman patois, more monotonous than the fall of rain, while the air of the hurdy-gurdy, piercing and thrilling, filled the hall like a continued wailing from a herd of kids.

"Enough!" cried the public; "be done, *fouchtri!*"

"To the door!"

"Enough! enough!"

"Silence, François!"

"Ta bouche, bébé!"

"Stow it! I say! *pétrasquin!*"

It was the *Parigot* wit replying to the wit of the provinces. The people had indeed arisen, but not as Vieillecloche would have wished. Instead of tearing up the paving-stones in honor of misunderstood Genius, and casting out the robbers of Glory, they were content to finish the punch and laugh in the face of the poet who bored them with his doggerel.

Besides, all these questions of signatures to pictures, of museum locks picked, and of Richard the Lion-hearted interested nobody.

But the banging of the door now began covering the bing! bing! of the tune. The public was going out in a mass. Vieillecloche tried to keep them by new flights of oratory which had no echo. Phil foresaw that the fierce tribune of the people would soon be making his prophetic gestures and proclaiming the eternal glory of the *autochtones* alone with his hurdy-gurdy, like St. Anthony with his pig. So Phil went away, followed to the very street by the exasperated grinding of the crank.

"What madness!" Phil said to himself. "Poufaille is certainly earning his money. He puts as much heat into it as if some one had stolen his own share of glory." Poufaille a despoiled young genius! Phil, at the very idea, could not refrain from laughter.

"I must wait for him here," he thought; "I shall see him when he comes out."

He walked back and forth, but Poufaille did not come out. Still, Phil lost nothing by waiting. A final bang of the door made him turn his head and—what did he see but, arm in arm and laughing and talking together as gay as school-boys, Vieillecloche with Caracal!

"Well, I never! That's too much!" Phil said, as he followed them with his eyes, trying to gather from their gestures the meaning of their conversation.

Vieillecloche lifted his hands, as if to show that they were empty. Caracal spoke low to him. Vieillecloche nodded approvingly.

"Those fine fellows must be preparing some stroke of

business," Phil said to himself, strongly interested. "Who knows if I do not play a part in it? It may be my turn—and Miss Ethel will no longer hear of Richard the Lion-hearted. The attacks will now fall on Caracal. Bravo! But perhaps Miss Ethel will not be displeased to learn of the friendship between Caracal and Vieille-cloche. One might have supposed they would not be quite so thick! I don't understand it," was Phil's conclusion. Moreover, he was accustomed never to take seriously what Caracal said or did.

"Besides," Phil added, "Poufaille must know what is going on. I have not seen him come out, but he will tell me to-night." So he determined to dine at Mère Michel's, where he would have a chance of seeing Poufaille.

For a long time he had not met the *copains*—they had almost become strangers to him. The talk about art and the masterpieces traced with a burnt match on grimy tables no longer interested him. He felt himself out of place in the environment, but he wished to see Poufaille that very evening. To begin with, he would have the pleasure of offering his services to the poor devil, who could not be very rich, to judge from the sale at the Hôtel Drouot a few days before. Phil would find some delicate means of being useful to him. Who knows if he would ever see him again? It would be like a farewell to his own past. So Phil went to Mère Michel's.

His past mounted up to his brain. It seemed to rise up whole and entire before him when, near the Boulevard, in a narrow street, he saw the painted canvas and fixtures deposited at the stage entrance of a circus. The

damp courtyard, the frayed walls, the store-rooms of stage-properties, the theater's insides—all that was a little of his own past.

It was himself, again, whom he elbowed in the Boulevard beside the Café des Artistes, where women with red tresses topped with feathers were drinking from little glasses with ill-shaven messieurs, showing each other photographs and programs, and signing engagements with fingers stiff with rings. Phil could hear their technical slang: *Chiqué—dèche—purée—j'te fais une bleue en cinq secs!* "Garçon, two absinthes, and get a move on you, *bougre d'andouille!*"

Strolling artists offered to do his portrait for two sous. A bohemian imitated an *ocarina* by swelling out his cheeks. A contortionist spread his little carpet and dislocated himself on the sidewalk.

"Do you like my trade?" he said to Phil, who stood looking at him. "If you do, I'll hire you!"

"What a world it is, all the same! And to think that once I loved it all," Phil thought, as he turned away.

Farther on there was a restaurant still celebrated for the reason that, long ago, my Lord l'Arsoville had supped there with Cora Pearl. As Phil passed in front of it, he saw the staircase decorated with green palms, and he thought he recognized Helia going up,—it was her hat and cloak,—and, lifting his eyes, Phil saw, at the window above, the profile of the Duke of Morgania. Phil lowered his head and went his way pensively, leaving behind him the restaurant full of fragrance and lights, wherein the beautiful butterflies of the night were coming to burn their wings.

To escape from these mournful visions, Phil called up the remembrance of Ethel. The remainder of his way he traversed without noticing the distance. He had already passed the Seine and gone under the vault of the Institut, following a quiet old street. A moment later he was at Mère Michel's. A volley of enthusiastic cries welcomed him. Phil asked himself if he were not the plaything of a dream.

"Vive Phil! Hurrah for Phil! Bravo, Phil! A *ban* for Phil!"

"Pan! pan! pan! pan! pan!"

"It must be my tall hat," thought Phil, and he took it off with a quick movement. The welcome doubled its noise.

"Vive Phil!"

"Hurrah!"

"Am I dreaming?" Phil asked himself, "or are these men crazy?" They were all crowding round him, patting him on the back and shaking his hand.

"Old Phil!"

"Good old Phil!"

"My best compliments, old comrade!"

"Compliments for what? Whose compliments?" Phil asked in a daze.

"But for your picture, of course!"

"What picture?"

"Your picture in the Luxembourg. Have n't you read the papers?"

You could have "knocked Phil over with a feather." They were telling him he had a picture in the Luxembourg, and he was the only one not to know it! Surely

they must be amusing themselves with him—they must have got up a practical joke. So he went away, ill disposed for a *rigolade* after the events of the day.

He had not gone ten steps when he stumbled on Poufaille; but it was Poufaille cold and sinister, a Northern Poufaille as it were, closer buttoned up than Vieille-cloche in his rôle as statesman.

"How goes it?" Phil said cordially, holding out his hand.

Poufaille did not budge.

"What's the matter?" said Phil. "You're giving me the cold shoulder! Is everybody losing his head? You won't take my hand, good old Poufaille!"

"I am no longer your good old Poufaille!"

"But what have I done?" Phil asked.

"What have you done?" Poufaille burst out, unable to restrain himself longer. "I'll tell you what you've done. You've stolen my share of glory—you sign pictures which were painted by me! I've seen my cows in the Luxembourg, signed by your name—the picture into which I put my whole soul!"

If lightning had fallen at Phil's feet he would have been less surprised. So he was the robber cuckoo and Poufaille was the young genius! Now he understood the meaning of the "Punch d'Indignation."

"That's what you've done to me!" Poufaille cried, quite beside himself. "You would hinder me from flying with my own wings. I had something here" (and Poufaille gave himself a tremendous blow on the forehead), "I had something here—and you robbed me of it!"

"Your cows—" Phil began in distress, "it was a joke

I wanted to play on Caracal. I bought the picture and signed it—that is true. But was it yours? I did n't know it."

"You did n't know it! Does n't one know the mark of the lion?"

"My good Poufaille, let me explain it to you—let me—" Phil all but stammered; it was not easy to tell Poufaille that his picture had been used as a scarecrow) —"let me explain it to you."

"We 'll have the explanation in public," Poufaille shouted.

"Only let me tell you, my dear Poufaille—"

But Poufaille would listen to nothing. He only knew that he was perishing of hunger while another was stealing his glory. In his rage fragments of the speech came back to him in chance words: "*Les autochtones!*—young genius—you have deposited in the bosom of glory an *autochtone's* egg—do you understand?—an *autochtone's* egg!"

"Poufaille," Phil said gravely, "if I have done you wrong, I swear it was not done wilfully. How much do you think your cows are worth? I 'll give you whatever you ask."

"Money!" Poufaille answered indignantly. "You dare offer me money to purchase my silence!"

"Listen to me, I beseech you!"

"No! I am going to tell them all about it inside there!" and Poufaille, terrible and furious, entered Mère Michel's.

It was now Phil's turn to be angry—not against the poor simpleton Poufaille, but Caracal should pay for

this! "What will Miss Rowrer think of me with this story of a forged signature?" Phil said to himself.

The idea that his name figured on a picture in the collection of daubs which form the foreign hall of the Luxembourg Museum—and that just when he dreamed he was sure of fame! At the very thought he clenched his fists with fury. So Caracal had bewitched the Fine Arts Commission into accepting such a horror!—or perhaps they were willing to discredit American art by presenting to the public a wretched work bought for a few sous in a junk-shop! And now he, Phil, was to suffer shipwreck from the ridiculousness of it, while Ethel would laugh! What could be Caracal's aim? With a flash it came to him that the abominable critic wished to make him grotesque and odious at the same time.

"Ah, Caracal," Phil said to himself, "you are mistaken this time. You shall pay for all this!"

A sudden idea came to him: "What if I should go and punch his head!"

He knew he should find Caracal at home at that hour. It was the day before the *feuilleton*, impertinent and familiar, which he was in the habit of signing "A Parisian," or the *chronique scandaleuse* of courts by an "Old Diplomat," alternating with art criticisms signed "Caracal." A cab happened to be passing. Phil hailed it, called out the address to the driver; and—*en route!* What streets he took, through what quarters, Phil did not know. He knew only that the critic was going to have a bad quarter of an hour. He must have from him a frank explanation, without dodging or subter-

fuge. This time there would be no duel carried on by winking the eye and shrugging the shoulder. Phil stiffened his arm as the cab stopped short. He jumped to the ground and with three steps reached the concierge's lodge.

"M. Caracal, if you please!"

"Seventh floor, last door—on the court!"

Phil ran quickly up the stairs. A thick carpet deadened his steps, and he could hear, behind the doors, the sound of pianos or the laughter of children. He imagined to himself the pleasant homes with their lamps surrounded by a circle of golden heads.

"Good, simple, good people!" Phil thought. "Perhaps it is from you that Caracal takes his studies for 'The House of Glass'—wolf in the sheepfold that he is!"

The thought increased his anger. He went up and up. At last he was going to see that apartment of Caracal's which no one ever entered. No doubt it would be insolent in its luxury and have a big valet in the ante-room and invaluable pictures which this grafter of the press must have extorted for his collection of art works, of which he was always talking in his articles.

Seventh floor, last door! It must be there. Phil had reached it. There was no bell! Phil knocked, but there was no reply. The key had been forgotten in the door, and he entered. On a table a small lamp shed its light over papers and books. There were other books on the ground and on chairs—perhaps the encyclopedia from which Caracal drew his weekly erudition. In the half-obscurity, farther back, Phil saw a brass bedstead like a child's couch. Beside it, on a chest of drawers, there

were garments carefully folded and a hat protected from the dust by a newspaper. On the floor were shoes beside a blacking-brush. On the chimneypiece there was a photograph in which an old lady held the hand of an old gentleman. Everything in the room was neatly ordered and touching in its simplicity.

"I must have mistaken the floor," Phil said to himself. "This is not the apartment of an arbiter of society elegance."

He was on the point of retreating when, on a sofa near him in the shadow, some one moved, and he seemed to hear a sob. Phil started back and the figure on the sofa came into full light. It was Caracal asleep. There was an expression of sadness on his face and tears were on his cheeks—the cheeks which Phil had always seen smirking with a convulsive sneer.

Caracal, when he came home, must have thrown himself on the sofa worn out with his day's work. The calm which had come over his features showed that he had dropped off to sleep in some sad and gentle dream. Phil, in spite of himself, looked up to the chimneypiece where the old lady and the old gentleman seemed watching over their child—yes, yes, Phil was sure of it now, from the sadness on the face of Caracal. He must have gone back to his childhood; perhaps, in his dreams, he heard the beloved voices which had long since become silent. A sob from Caracal made Phil tremble again—a dull, deep sob like the sigh of a dying man. One would have said that his whole life was rising up before him—his heart's bitterness, humiliations undergone and illusions fled, the success of others and regrets for his own ill-doing.

Phil felt his anger fade away. He divined all the wretchedness of his life, so full of meanness and bluff. Asleep, the poor creature, overcome by his distress, seemed sacred to him. He went out without noise.

"Old Caracal," he murmured, "I 'll leave you to your dream—that shall be your punishment."

CHAPTER VIII

A QUEEN FOR KINGS

POUFAILLE, seated on a high stool, was copying in the Louvre Gallery. Since his share of glory had been stolen from him, he had become as down-cast as a caged lion from whom his quarter of meat has been taken. Poor Poufaille! Everything fell to pieces in his hands. His studio had been dispersed at auction; "Liberty" and "Fraternity" had been sold for nothing, not even for enough to pay up the garlic- and potato-seller. And his cows were in the Luxembourg under another name! What reasons for sadness! He did not even listen to Suzanne, babbling near him on a lower seat. He was timidly copying the goat and kids of Paul Potter. The company of such good animals consoled him a little for that of men.

He was a touching sight, with the veins in his forehead swollen by his effort, exhausting himself in the handling of brushes and paint-knives, which were things too delicate for his big hairy hands made for the plow and the wine-press.

Nothing could amuse him. Yet Suzanne lifted toward him her laughing face and told her funniest stories. One was an adventure of the other evening, when she had

taken Helia's hat and cloak to go and sup with the duke. *Mon Dieu!* how she had laughed. At the thought of it she still held her sides, careless of the stares of the public.

"I wish you had been there, my little Poufaille, when I went up the stairs. They bowed to me as if I were a queen—*ah, mais oui!* I made myself as fine as I could and I had Helia's hat and cloak. If Phil had seen me he might have thought it was Helia.

"*Eh bien! quoi!*" Suzanne exclaimed, interrupting herself to look at Poufaille. "What do you mean by grinding your teeth when I speak of Phil? One would say you were going to eat some one up. Phil does n't hear us, you know; he is up there with Helia, who is posing for him in what they used to call their oasis—the garden, you know, where you wanted to grow potatoes. Oh, forgive me, my little Poufaille, I did n't wish to hurt your feelings," Suzanne added quickly, as she saw Poufaille clenching his fist at the remembrance of the rejected potatoes, as painful to him as the stolen share of glory. Poufaille went back to work with a heavy sigh.

"Besides," Suzanne went on, "you know I'm not so stuck on Phil myself any more, and I wish he were here, to tell him what I think of his way of acting toward Helia. I would n't hide the truth from him; and I'd like to know if he'd answer as he used to do in his attic—'I'm not that kind of a man!' Ah!" Suzanne continued, "you're all the same, you men! You're not worth the rope to hang you!"

Poufaille sighed as if his heart were breaking. He kept on painting his goat and kids.

"I wish you had been there when the garçon brought me in," Suzanne began again, to finish her story. "Imagine a table all spread with fruits and flowers and lights; and whom do I see coming toward me but the duke, in evening clothes, leaning over and kissing my hand. I had my veil down and he did not recognize me—it was Helia he was waiting for; the duke had invited her with a little note, very well expressed, you know, such as dukes know how to write. When Helia had opened the note she asked me to go and present her excuses. You can imagine I took the opportunity—I whom you see before you. I had supped before that with smart people, but with a duke never! What would you have done, Poufaille? That humbug of a Caracal once told me I should have to get down on my knees when I spoke to him. Well, I just took off my veil and said: 'Cuckoo! It's me! You're waiting for Helia, but she begs to be excused!' Would you think men could be so odd? My little Poufaille, Helia's stock went up with him at once. I could see it by the way he spoke of her. But never mind that; he was very amiable and kept me to dinner. I did n't wish to, but he insisted so—and it's a very chic place, that restaurant. Then all at once there was a squabble at the door and I saw two bears coming in!—I mean two men like bears, bowing to the ground to the duke and calling him monseigneur. They spoke of lots of things—that they had just come from the monseigneur's house; that they had been told monseigneur was in diplomatic consultation—*et patati et patata*—and then there was Turkey and Morgania and I don't know what all. The duke had a very embar-

rassed look—"my dear Zrnitschka—Bjelopawlitji—my dear minister—"

"Ministers—those two bears! I was bursting! And, on my word, I believe the duke presented me as the diplomatic agent! After that there was dinner and jokes and songs, and the duke brewed a champagne salad, while I tickled the two bears under the chin to make them swallow brandied cherries."

Suzanne spoke in vain. Poufaille kept the fated look of a man who has been grazed by glory as it passes. He lifted his head sullenly and then let it fall again on his breast, as if crushed.

"Attention!" suddenly cried Suzanne, who was looking down the gallery. "Here are serious customers—Miss Rowrer and Mme. Rowrer, Mr. Will, the duke, and Caracal. I'm sure they're going to visit Phil up there in his oasis. Helia is n't expecting such an honor!"

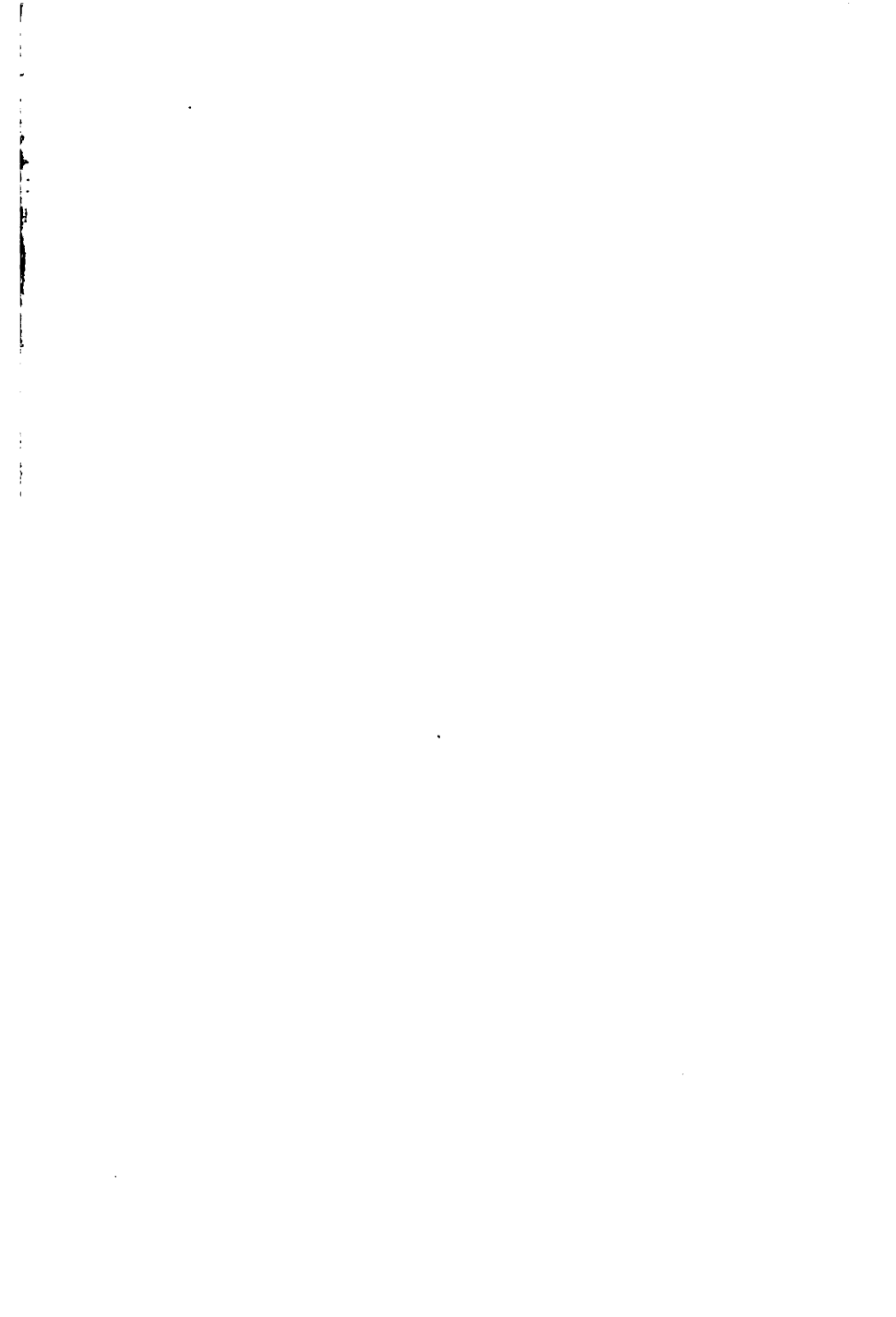
Miss Rowrer and her party came on, a compact group among the scattered visitors. Ethel was listening absently to Caracal. Grandma was examining the crowd. The duke was winking at the pictures, while Will looked at the parquet floor.

Caracal seemed delighted. Besides his opportunity to shine by telling off names and dates, he was also going to show the party one of the hanging gardens of Paris. Presently he would explain the very *modus operandi* for making such blooming terraces—fine sand, tar, gravel, and earth.

"You know, Miss Rowrer, you go to the Louvre Gardens up a staircase."



Suzanne and Poufaille at the Louvre



"Awful!" said grandma.

"A winding staircase cut in the thickness of the wall."

"Really! Oh, how nice that is!" said Ethel, to whom these little details gave the sensation of being abroad. She forgave the lack of an elevator, as long as the staircase was winding and cut in the thickness of the wall—something impossible to find in her own country.

"It's a kind of Jacob's ladder that will take us up to Paradise," Caracal continued. "A real Paradise, where I myself have known an Adam and Eve, known them personally, intimately!"

"Oh, M. Caracal, don't talk of that now," Miss Rowrer said, "but tell me what this picture is."

Caracal explained the picture, regretting that Ethel did not question him about the Adam and Eve he had known in the Paradise.

Poufaille, who had lifted his head, lowered it quickly. The party was just in front of him, all looking at his picture. He had heard Caracal say to Miss Rowrer: "An artist, a great artist, with a brain, but no luck! It is incredible, his lack of luck—I could tell you a story—"

But Caracal was interrupted by grandma, who noticed the frayed cravat and worn shoes of Poufaille, and pointed him out to Will. Caracal presented Poufaille, who nearly fell from his high stool. The duke bowed. Ethel greeted him cordially, as well as Suzanne, at whom the duke did not even look.

"That's the way of the world!" Suzanne thought within herself.

"Do you really wish me to buy such a daub?" Will

said in an aside to grandma, after judging, at a glance, the "Goat and the Kids."

"Poor devil! he is in rags," Ethel murmured.

"All right," Will answered; "it's frightful, but I'll send it to my farm in Texas—it will give them a poor idea of grazing in the old country!"

Poufaille felt his legs tremble under him, and thought all the torrents of Pactolus were pouring down upon him when Will, taking his leave, gave him in advance the money for the order.

"Au revoir, Mlle. Suzanne! M. Poufaille, au revoir!" Miss Rowrer said, not a little flattered to know, not a Charley, but a real and genuine bohemian.

With a final bow, Poufaille watched the party going away, in utter amazement at the possession of so much money.

"Vive la joie—and fried potatoes!" Suzanne said, by way of moral.

Soon Ethel and grandma, Will, the duke, and Caracal were lost in the distance.

"You would think Caracal was the chief of the party," Suzanne remarked to Poufaille; "only look—you see nothing but him!"

Indeed, Caracal, who at first was abashed at not being allowed to tell the story of Adam and Eve, nor that of the false signature of the Luxembourg, became doubly amiable, and fished for compliments because of his courageous behavior toward Vieillecloche, a man with five corpses in his trail. Meanwhile, he went on explaining, endlessly, the pictures of the old masters. He greeted them as friends; he spoke familiarly of the painters,

called them by their first names and their nicknames—the old Breughel—the young Teniers—"Van Ryn" for Rembrandt—and so on.

He told over the jokes about the Louvre Museum. It was a national lounge, heated in winter and the place for a siesta in summer. He attacked the curators, who were incompetent, to his thinking; and he cited the forged art objects bought for their weight in gold, crowns and coins and jewels, and the famous Holbein on a mahogany panel—the Louvre's pride up to the day when, scratching it on the back, the words appeared: "Flor de Habaña—Lawyers' Club Brand"!

The duke passed along heedlessly. The Louvre for him was, most of all, a place in which you can talk amid sumptuous decoration. His only real interest in painting was in the hall of the Italian primitives, before the St. Morgana of Botticelli.

"St. Morgana, my ancestress," he said to Miss Rowrer.

He drew himself up as he pointed to the saint, amid the choir of angels, in a sky of gold above a fantastic landscape, where architecture and monuments were piled together. He seemed moved, especially when he explained to Miss Rowrer that he should definitively be obliged to go back to Morgania, that grave events were on the way, and that only the other evening he had had a diplomatic interview with his people's delegates.

Miss Rowrer liked him better, with this air of one convinced of his own importance and duties, than when he was making fun of himself with the skeptical tone which she abhorred. Just as she was glad to know a real and

genuine bohemian, so she was delighted to walk with the scion of a legendary family, whose ancestress figured in the Louvre, painted by Botticelli, surrounded by angels in a golden sky. She found it amusing to take the arm of a man in whose pedigree there was the equal of the White Lady of Potsdam and the Cavalier of Hatfield House. It was all so un-American and exciting.

She was also really at her ease in the Louvre among these old royal personages. She pleased herself in the midst of history and polished courts. Her intelligence revealed to her their grandeur.

"I like sincere men who are faithful to their traditions," she said. "There is a noble side to it all which I understand."

She admired the effete generations who had heaped here, to the very ceiling, royal escutcheons and chimeras and victories.

"There is something great in it," she said; "you feel the conviction of it. Compare it with the frightful style which artists bungle with nowadays! The beautiful has had its time here; it is our turn now, in our great Republic! Faith in traditions—that is what produces masterpieces! Whether royalty, as in the old times, or the Republic, as with us—I recognize only that."

"But there is a golden mean," the duke said, conciliatingly.

"Away with the golden mean, with cowardly compromises and satisfied selfishness, with falsehood and insincerity. We must be one thing or another—loyalty before all else!"

Grandma and Will approved this.

"Ah!" the duke thought to himself, struck by Miss Rowrer's accents of conviction, "it would n't be well to fail in one's words to this lady!"

"This is a Signorelli," Caracal explained, pointing out a picture; "this is a Filippo Lippi; this is a Pinturicchio."

"Say, M. Caracal, if we stop at every picture of the Quattro Cento we shall never reach Paradise. Where is your winding staircase?"

There were halls after halls, marbles and gilding, the Salon Carré, and galleries with resplendent jewels; marble for the pavement, and then parquetry shining like a smooth lake, and pictures, and pictures again. The copyists were up on their ladders in galleries, which heap together civilizations that have disappeared, statues of gods and the mummies of kings, decayed grandeur pell-mell with fragments of columns and open tombs and women's jewels. And there was the crouching sphinx seeming to take them to witness that all things pass like a dream.

Miss Rowrer and the duke walked together. In front were grandma and Will and Caracal. The duke sought to understand Miss Rowrer's ideas, which seemed contradictory to him. How was he to reconcile her admiration both for republic and royalty?

"Miss Rowrer," the duke began, "your theories are contrary to progress. Your extreme loyalty implies a government which is unchangeable."

"Not at all!" Ethel answered. "Greatness is in the constant effort toward progress; it is the pursuit of the best. A people's loyalty toward its king is very beautiful."

"*Eh bien*, then!" the duke replied.

"I told you my way of looking at things the day we visited St. Denis," Ethel continued. "But you forget one thing—the king's loyalty to his people!"

They were leaving the gallery and walking ever onward. They saw a monumental staircase under a vault as high as a cathedral apse, and then there were more halls, with marbles and gilding and galleries, never ending.

"But where is your Paradise?" Miss Rowrer asked.

"It is here," answered Caracal.

He gave a glance at the guardian who was pacing up and down the hall, and Will slipped a heavy *pourboire* into the man's hand.

"Is Monsieur Phil up there?"

"The former gardener? Yes. Go up." Lifting a piece of tapestry at the corner of a wall, a little door appeared—it was the door of the staircase.

"Go ahead, M. Caracal; show us the way!" Ethel said.

Caracal, proud to lead, showed them the way up. They went on, turning round and round in single file, the staircase being wide enough for nothing else.

"This reminds me of going up the Monument in London," Ethel said.

"And me of the corkscrew in the Mammoth Cave," said grandma.

"Only a few more steps," said Caracal, as he opened the door giving on the roof.

The light was dazzling. Great clouds floated high in a sky that was sweet and calm. Across the branches of the

garden they looked on Paris, bathed in sun. The great city stretched out from horizon to horizon and, vibrating with the heat, seemed to wave like a sea. Grandma, Ethel, and Will, as well as the duke, stopped short. While the distant view was full of grandeur, the nearer scene was just as charming. There were shaded alleys, and under the oleanders and apple- and pear-trees, currants and strawberries were ripening. Caracal was already beginning his explanations.

"The green spots you see over there are the hanging gardens of the Rue de Valois. If we were a little higher up we could see those of the Automobile Club of the Place de la Concorde. This is the way they make them—first a layer of Norway tar, then fine sand, and then gravel—"

"M. Caracal," Ethel interrupted, "you are right; this is a real Paradise!"

"And over there you have Adam and Eve," Caracal said, pointing amid the greenery to where Phil was painting Helia, posed in an old arm-chair half hidden by climbing plants.

"That is what is best in the Louvre," Ethel said to the group, looking at Helia. "Let us greet her Majesty Beauty!"

Phil had just caught sight of Ethel and her party. He hurriedly laid down his palette and came forward. Helia saw them also, and arose and bowed. Ethel recognized her and spoke with a friendly manner. They looked at each other in that peculiar way which women have of taking each other's measure,—it was like a mute dialogue between Beauty and Culture. But Beauty—

poor Helia—lowered her eyes. She became humble and acknowledged herself vanquished.

For Helia no longer had any hope. She understood, she saw with fright the ever-growing distance between herself and Phil. Ah, no! Phil was no longer the same; he was above her, far above, among the rich and powerful; and he would continue his upward march, while she, Helia, would, little by little, go downwards.

She had agreed to pose for him that day—it was the decisive test. It had cost her much to do it. Phil, after all, ought to know what his conscience told him to do; but she did not wish there should be any fault on her part. She had never had the courage to say to herself it was all over, until this day, which she was passing alone with him. She had come to see if he would remember—if the trees in bloom amid their oasis would recall anything to him. She counted on the complicity of the blue sky and the fragrance of roses. But the day had passed, under the splendid heavens, and they had not, as in other days, gathered fruit from the trees or picked flowers from the parterres. Phil had been good-natured, but he was like a friend and nothing more. Phil—she saw it clearly—Phil would be a stranger for her to-morrow. Who knows? The time might come when he would forget even her name.

Helia acknowledged that it was possible when she looked at Miss Rowrer, who drew near and began chatting with Phil. What charm there was in her words! Helia was never tired of listening to her. She felt no jealousy of Ethel, whose goodness saved her from envy. She admired her in silence. Sometimes, like a lightning

flash, she seemed to understand the abyss which separated them, and then everything reëntered the shadow. No—she did not know; everything escaped her grasp in that sphere of life, more inaccessible to her than the white clouds up in the depths of the azure. What had she with which to struggle against this young girl, so brilliant and so playful, before whom Phil and the duke were content to seem little? And then, she was so rich!

But Helia blushed for herself and quickly cast away any thoughts of Miss Rowrer's wealth. Since she could not help loving Phil, she at least would not cease giving him her esteem. She looked in a sort of fear at Miss Rowrer, of whom so much was said, and who seemed so simple and gay. What could she do against so many advantages—she, Helia, who had only her beauty? And perhaps Phil found her ugly now!

"What are you painting?" Ethel asked Phil. "I suppose I may look."

"Miss Rowrer, I beg you," Phil answered, "give me your advice."

Miss Rowrer squinted with her eye, measured and made a few professional gestures, probably the only thing she retained from her art studies among so many social duties. She remarked a few things, showing refined tastes, and then looked at Helia as a connoisseur.

She admired her noble profile, like that of a marble Venus, her full neck and bare arms, and the sumptuous thickness of her hair over shoulders which would have thrown Phidias into despair.

"What success a young girl like that would have in

society—if she belonged to society—” thought Miss Rowrer. “Ought not beauty like that to overcome all social distinctions?”

Helia appeared to Miss Rowrer as the splendid flowering of the Louvre, personifying in herself all the masterpieces heaped up beneath their feet—all that men have loved and made divine in marble or on canvas. At her feet roses and fuchsias breathed forth their fragrance, sweet as the Attic breeze.

“What you are doing there, Monsieur Phil, is very fine—a magnificent study,” Miss Rowrer said. “But it is not up to the model. Is it, Monsieur le Duc?”

The duke assented.

“Tell me, Monsieur Phil,” Miss Rowrer continued, “what is that thing on the ground, with your palette on top of it?”

She pointed to one of the busts which lined the walks.

“Those are busts,” Phil began.

“Yes, but of whom?” Ethel asked.

“Imperial and presidential busts,” Phil explained, “Napoleon III, Charles X, Louis Philippe.”

“Really,” Miss Rowrer said, with amusement; “only think, each bust represents a revolution. They are sovereigns who no longer pleased—let them be an example to you, monseigneur,” she added, laughing. “This is not Paradise, then, but the other place—each of these busts is a paving-stone of good intentions!”

“And that, Phil, that old arm-chair which has lost its gilding? Mademoiselle Helia, who was in it just now, looked, with these busts at her feet, like a sovereign surrounded by the dwarfs of the court. What is that old arm-chair?”



Ethel and the Royal Throne



"A throne, Miss Rowrer!"

"Now you are laughing at me!"

"Not at all."

"The throne of some fairy king?"

"The throne of King Louis Philippe," answered Phil. In a few words he explained how it happened to be there in the company of the busts.

"It is not a very comfortable seat," grandma remarked.

"They 'd make a better one than that at Grand Rapids," Will added.

"Will you try it, Miss Rowrer?" Caracal hastened to ask. "Be seated on the throne; you might believe yourself a queen."

"Ah! that 's all the same to me," said Miss Rowrer.

"The queen you are worthy to be," Caracal corrected, by way of compliment. "You would not have ill become Louis Philippe's throne, I imagine."

"I hope not, indeed," Ethel replied. "What! that bourgeois king, that king of the golden mean, who was neither brave nor cowardly, without vice as without virtue, flat, like a pancake; an old wolf turned shepherd? And I could sit on a throne and fancy myself the consort of that imitation goodman, be queen of such a king? Even for his kingdom, I would not!"

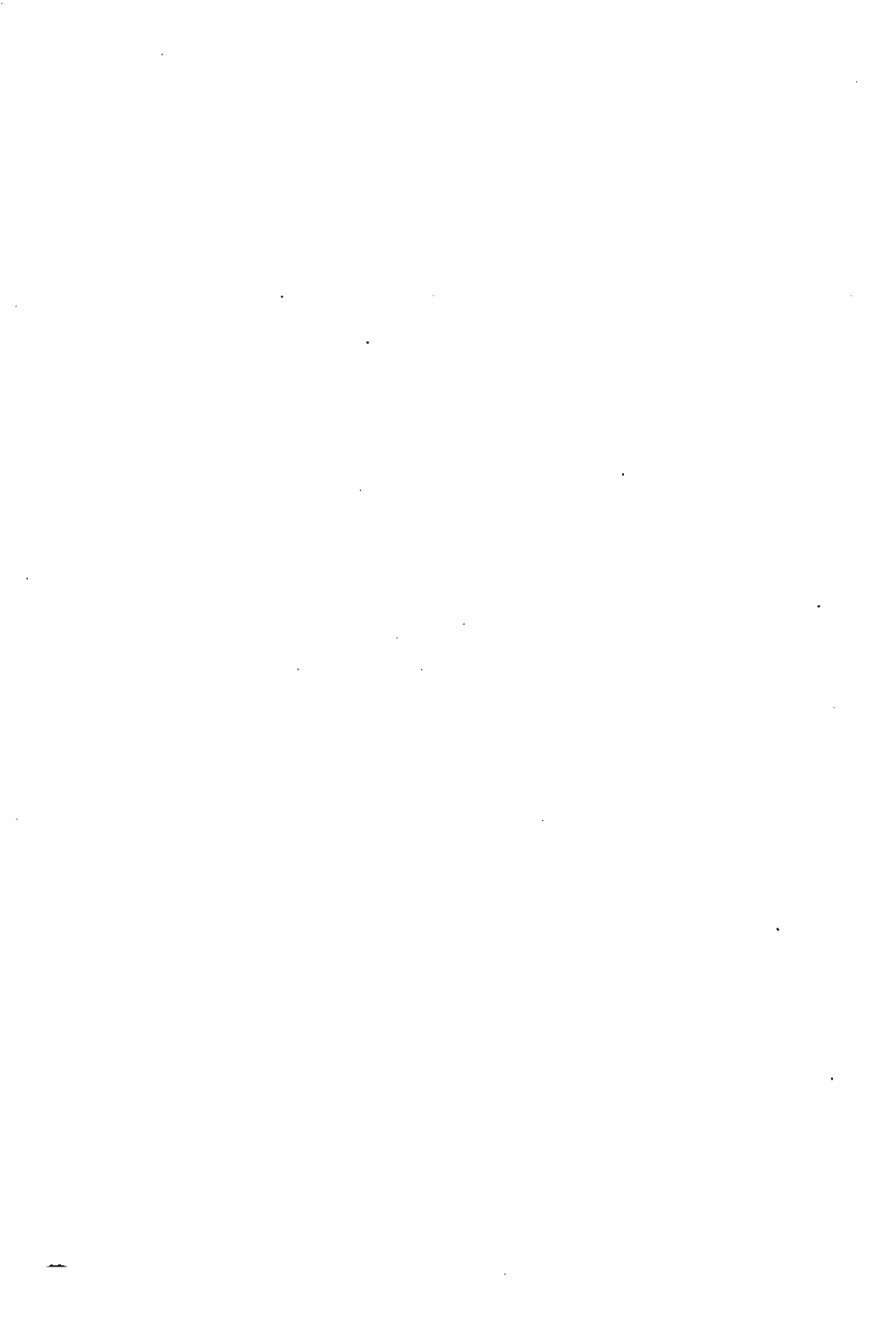
Helia looked at Miss Rowrer as she prodded with her parasol the worn velvet of the throne. She thought of her own half hesitation to sit down in it the first time she came to the oasis, and how she had answered Phil: "A king's throne! You would n't think of it—a poor girl like me!" To her it had seemed a sort of sacrilege,

whereas Miss Rowrer, quite the contrary, turned her back on it with disdain and walked away, saying to the duke and Phil:

“Louis Philippe was possibly a king, but at any rate he was not a man! The people did well to cast him out.”

And Helia asked herself in amazement: “Who is this Miss Rowrer that judges kings and would refuse them their kingdoms? Is she, then, more than a queen?”

PART III
YOUTHFUL FOLLIES



CHAPTER I

TEUFF-TEUFF! TEUFF! BRRR!

WE should need words from the old, old time, worn from long use, to give an idea of Mme. de Grojean's house in her little corner of the provinces. It was typical of its kind and just the opposite of any truly Parisian corner. The latter would have been a populous, noisy street, with odors from the markets, from horses, from tobacco. The former was a deserted street, where you could hear sparrows chattering on the housetops and breathe the fragrance of mignonne and new-mown hay.

The house of Mme. de Grojean—"grand'mère," as Yvonne called her—formed the angle of a street on a very provincial place. It was on an open space, in the middle of which a water-jet, long since dry, marked on its basin a turning shadow like a sun-dial.

The house and garden wall formed one of the sides of the place as far as the river, which was crossed by a bridge; and, beyond, the plain stretched out.

Place and house, and trees overhanging the wall, and the street where grass grew between the paving-stones—all had the look of having always been there, of being there forever,—changeless as the hills of the horizon.

But worthiest of description was the salon where grand'mère with her daughter and her granddaughter Yvonne were seated in the dim light, amid tapestries of old silk and brown furniture, with glints of brass and portraits in their frames.

Grand'mère sat squarely back in her wheeled chair, knitting a pair of stockings. The younger Mme. de Grojean was looking through a fashion-paper. Yvonne, by the half-opened blinds, glanced from time to time out on the place while continuing her work. Her little table was encumbered with ribbons and light stuffs. She was finishing a gown, with a heap of patterns around her; and her little scissors traveled slowly through the muslin.

"It's this ribbon that gives me trouble," Yvonne said, half aloud, as if speaking to herself. "Why, this ribbon should go on the right!" she went on, with a comical air of surprise.

"By no means, my daughter!" Mme. de Grojean protested.

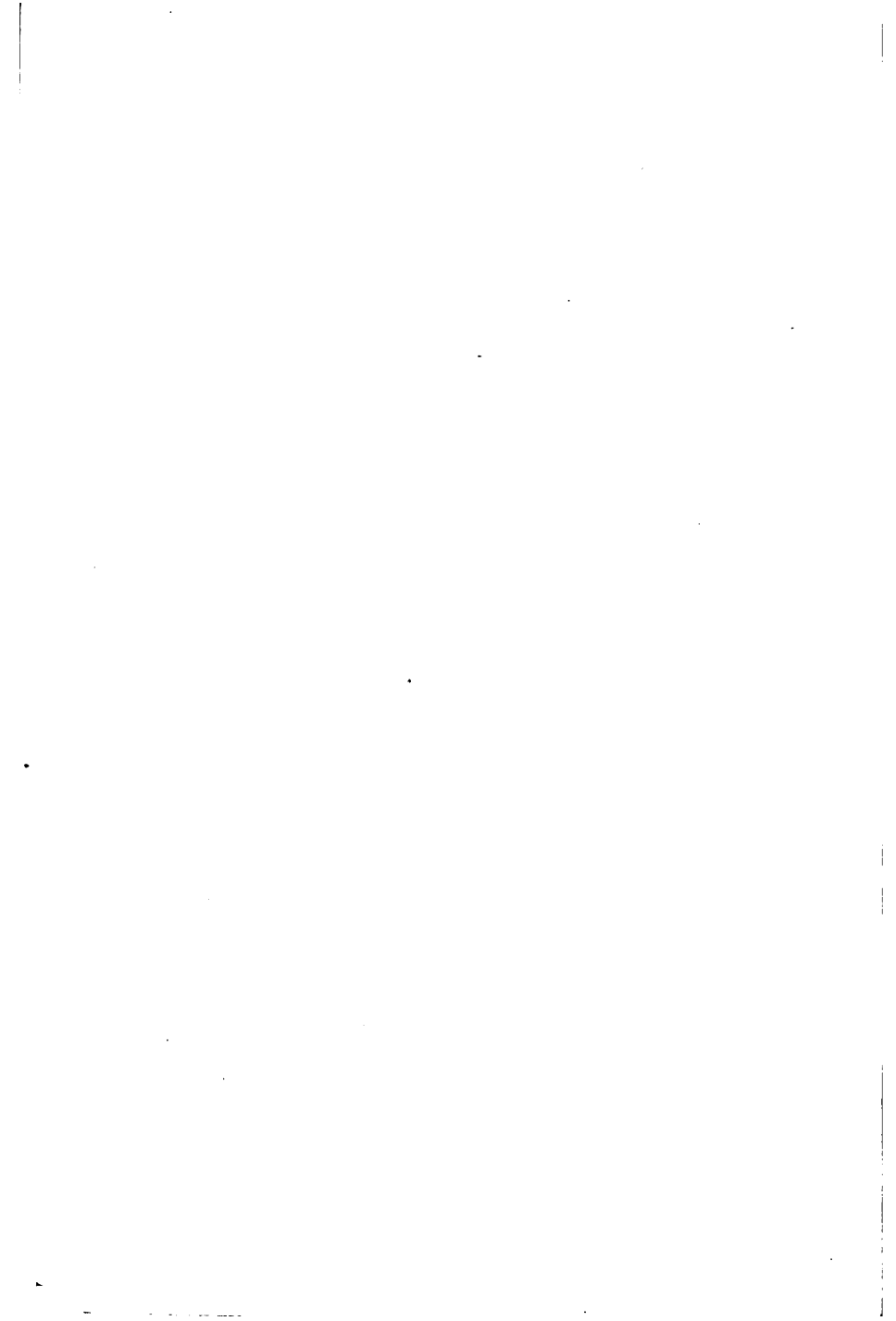
"Yes, yes! I assure you. Look at the fashion-paper. I must find out for myself," Yvonne concluded gravely, with her chin in her hand and her eyes fixed on the engraving. "I shall have to ask Cousin Henri, who was present at the last ball of the prefecture."

"Yvonne," said the grandmother, stopping her knitting, "Yvonne, really, you have nothing but dresses in your head. Rather than lose your time on such trifles, you'd do better to finish picking the lint for the soldiers."

"Grand'mère, here's the circus coming!" Yvonne interrupted suddenly, as she looked out on the place.



Watching the Arrival of the Rowers



"Those mountebanks?" grand'mère said, looking in her turn. "They are coming to the fair, just as they do every year. It must be they—I can tell by the dust they make. Only the big drum is lacking to make it complete."

In fact, an odd-looking vehicle had drawn up in the place. It was an immense auto, like a top-carriage behind and torpedo-like in front. In the carriage part two ladies were seated; two men occupied the torpedo-end. They wore big smoked glasses, which made them look like frogs, while the enormous auto, spitting and snorting, shook up its passengers, and rattled the canes and umbrellas in the wicker basket behind.

"It is near four o'clock," grand'mère said, consulting the familiar shadow of the water-jet. "They must be crazy to be exposing themselves to the heat; but such people fear nothing."

"They're brought up to rough it," Yvonne remarked.

"But people are saluting them, on my word," grand'mère said. "There is the *adjoint*, who must be there for the license; and there's Mme. Riçois also, and others besides. It looks as if they were personal acquaintances; they are shaking hands!"

Grand'mère in astonishment saw the ladies in the carriage-end part holding out their hands like princesses. One of them, the younger, got down and moved about to stir herself. As far as could be seen at that distance, between dust and sun, she was dressed in a light silk, very becoming in color. The plaits of the skirt molded her form, and fell to a level with the ground. Her head, enveloped in a cloud of gauze, was not to be seen.

"Where will elegance end, my poor Yvonne?" said grand'mère. "There 's a gown worth five times as much as your ball-dress."

"Oh, here are the horses!" Yvonne cried, pointing to magnificent animals which grooms were leading by the bridle from the direction of the railway station. As they passed by the auto the young girl went up to one of them, patted him on the neck, and, putting her hand in her pocket, gave him a lump of sugar.

"She must be the circus-rider," Yvonne guessed.

On the place there was now a little group of curious onlookers drawing near. The proprietor of the Lion d'Or made himself important. They could imagine him at that distance saying: "The Lion d'Or is the tourists' rendezvous—every one puts up at my place—every one. I do this—I have that—"

He had not the time to finish before the young girl had quickly climbed back into the auto, given orders to the groom, pointed to the inn, and made a sign of farewell to everybody.

Teuff-teuff! teuff! The auto swung into movement—teuff-teuff! brrrr! and off it went at high speed.

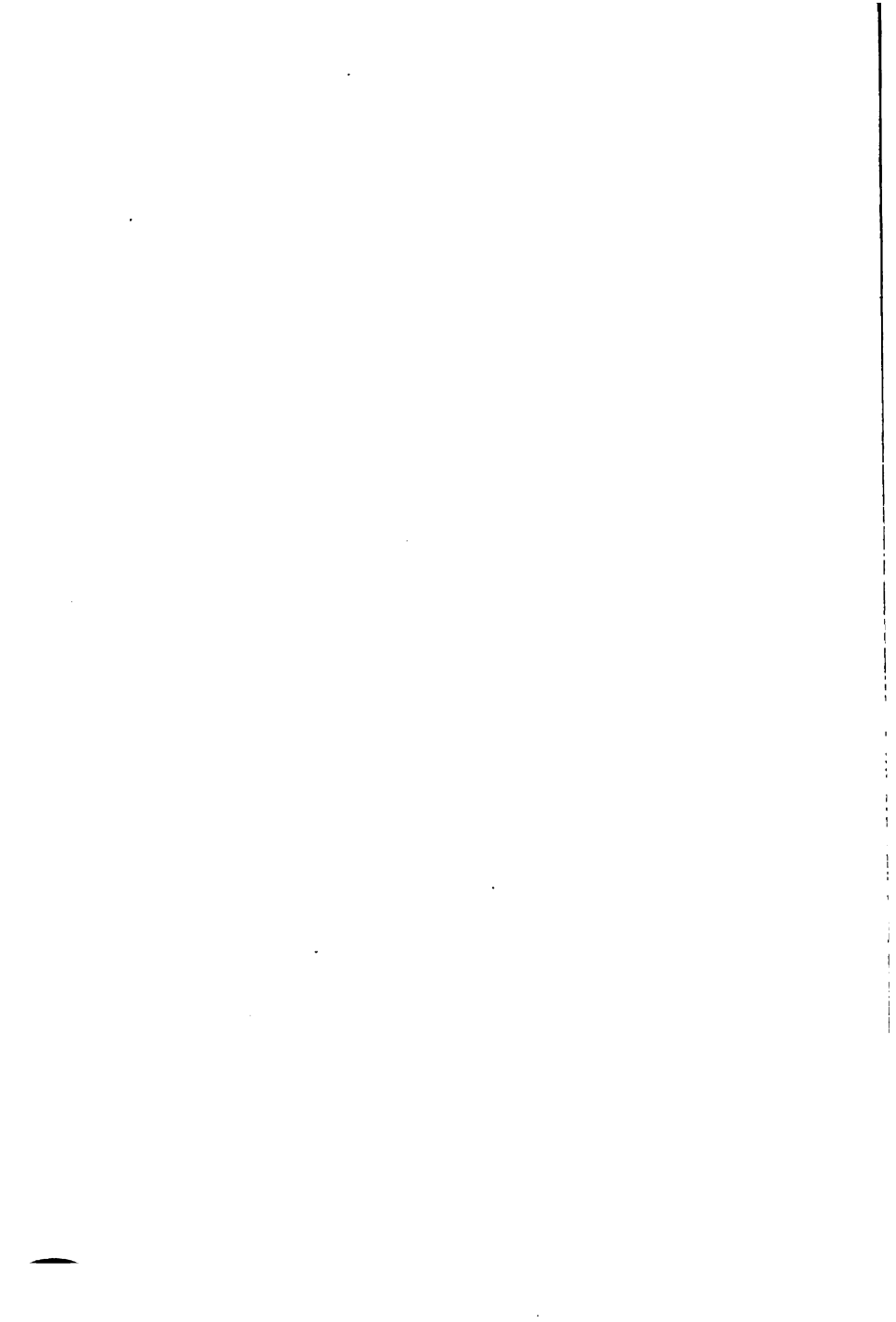
"Bon voyage!" grand'mère wished them. "How can people be allowed to race about like that! and all these do-nothings who salute them,—they could n't be more polite to ambassadors!"

No doubt it was an event. Every one along the road stared at the disappearing column of dust.

"It 's a strange world," said grand'mère. "But here comes Mme. Riçois; she may tell us something about them."



The Arrival of the Rowers



Grand'mère had scarcely finished when the bonne opened the salon door and announced Mme. Riçois, the banker's wife, a little woman all fire and motion, alert and dimpled and forever laughing.

"My compliments, dear Mme. Riçois. You have fine acquaintances!" grand'mère began. "You can tell us, I suppose, what has been turning our place upside down."

"But you ought to know," Mme. Riçois answered; "Yvonne is better acquainted with them than I am."

"Yvonne is acquainted with them?" grand'mère asked severely. "Who are they?"

"The Rowrers."

"Goodness gracious!" cried grand'mère, "in all this dust—and in such heat?"

"The Rowrers—what luck!" Yvonne cried. "I shall see Miss Ethel again; and I did not recognize her! All those dusters and masks and veils—they did n't wear anything like that in Paris the day I went in their auto, with Mr. Will Rowrer to conduct us."

"Are they going to stay in our town?" Mme. de Grojean asked.

"For several weeks, it seems."

"Where are they stopping?" grand'mère asked. "At the Hôtel de France or at the Hôtel d'Europe?"

"They are not at a hotel," answered Mme. Riçois, with an important air, as one having a great piece of news to communicate.

"Where are they going, then?" grand'mère persisted.

"To nobody's house."

"But where are they going to sleep? Not in the fields, I suppose?"

"Exactly—in the fields," Mme. Riçois said, looking in turn at grand'mère, Mme. de Grojean, and Yvonne, to enjoy their astonishment.

"You mean a house in the country?" grand'mère said. "What house?"

"No house," Mme. Riçois answered.

"Not in the open air, I suppose?"

"Exactly; in the open air!"

The effect which Mme. Riçois had missed with "the fields" was produced by her "open air."

"Is it possible!" grand'mère said, as she let her knitting fall. "People as rich as that sleep out of doors?"

"Rich!" observed Mme. Riçois. "They could buy the town and turn it into wheat-fields!"

"Then they must be crazy!"

"For that matter," Mme. Riçois went on, "when I say that they sleep out of doors—"

"Do tell us—you're laughing at us!"

"No, no! Let me explain. They are going to sleep out of doors, but under tents—camping out, they call it in America. I know all about it. My husband has been in correspondence with the Rowers and has had all the arrangements to make. The Comtesse de Donjeon asked them to come to her château for the summer. Miss Rower simply begged the comtesse to put at her disposal a corner of her estate, the most deserted and the most picturesque. She has taken the part she wished and set up her camp in it. She wanted to have it a surprise, and that is why I kept it a secret. It seems that camping out is delightful and Miss Rower intends starting the fashion of it in France."

"Poor France!" grand'mère exclaimed. "We needed only that! It's just like the automobiles. I'd rather be dragged about all my life in a cripple's go-cart than get into one."

"Not I!" said Yvonne. "I should love going in an auto!"

"Yvonne!" expostulated grand'mère.

Yvonne was silent, but thought, all the same, how delightful it would be to go here and there in the country and live under one's tent, by the bank of the river, along with Ethel. She listened absently to the remainder of the conversation, and looked far away at the highroad, golden with dust and with the green grass beside it.

Grand'mère took up the discourse.

"What is camping out, anyway?"

"Oh, it's all very simple," Mme. Riçois answered. "I have heard my husband talking about it."

"And I have heard Miss Ethel," said Yvonne. "She describes it so well!"

"But explain it to me," grand'mère said.

They gave her an explanation, in all its details, of camping out and summer touring and fishing, of chaperons and boys and girls.

"What!" grand'mère cried, "young men and young girls go camping out like that in the woods for weeks together, simply accompanied by a chaperon, and you consider that proper?"

"*Ma foi*, yes," said Mme. Riçois. "I should have been delighted with anything of the kind."

Yvonne kept silence, but she asked herself what harm there could be in walking through the country with

Monsieur Will or Monsieur Phil. Miss Ethel did it—why should not she?

“So that is what you call progress,” grand’mère observed. “Milliardaires making their horses travel by express train and lodging them at the hotel, while they themselves wander along the highroads and sleep out of doors like vagabonds—you must acknowledge it does not sound well!”

“Perhaps you like that kind of thing better,” Mme. Riçois retorted, pointing to the place.

An omnibus was driving up from the station, loaded with trunks and packages, with its horses prancing heavily. A traveler, with a single glass in his eye, was looking out.

The emotion aroused by the auto had scarcely calmed down. People were standing in the place in front of the hotel, which the last of the Rowrers’ horses had just entered. A few curious faces were still to be seen at the windows. The traveler, evidently thinking that all this was in his honor, bowed all around in his satisfaction at their welcome. As he got out of the omnibus at the Lion d’Or, amiable smiles were awaiting him—a politeness which he repaid with a nod, as if to say, “Greatly flattered, believe me!”

“Him I recognize,” said Yvonne. “I saw him two or three times in Paris. That is M. Caracal.”

But grand’mère no longer listened. She had returned to her knitting. The place no longer interested her; too many people were passing there. All this movement annoyed her. Why do not people stay at home? Meanwhile Caracal’s manœuvres were amusing Yvonne.

"Poor M. Caracal," she thought; "there he is, politely bowing to every one. Really, he seems persuaded that they've all come out to welcome him! If he knew that it was all for horses and an auto, his vanity as a writer would be wounded."

Yvonne sympathized with him, but she could not help being amused at the sight of Caracal jumping about like a puppet, giving orders about his trunks, and at last, when the crowd had seen enough of him, entering the Lion d'Or behind the Rowers' horses.

CHAPTER II

IN CAMP

GRAND'MÈRE de Grojean was talking about camping out, with many an "*est-ce possible!*" and "*Grand Dieu!*" and Mademoiselle Yvonne was looking at the dust in the distance, while Miss Rowrer and grandma were already inspecting their camping-ground.

"How well off we shall be here, Ethel!" grandma said. "What a capital idea! We shall breathe freely and, in spite of being in an old country, we shall have new experiences. I like new things!"

It was in full July. For several weeks Miss Rowrer had had the intention of quitting Paris. First of all, it was hot, and there was nothing to see, now that the Grand Prix race had been run. Besides, the national holiday of the Fourteenth of July was drawing near, and then the sovereign people dance and eat and drink in the street, which is really too common!

"Let us hurry away!" Miss Rowrer said. "Let us not take back to America a bad opinion of France. We must not judge it by Paris. Let us go and see France at home—away from dust and dances and noise, away from *punch d'indignation*. The countess has invited us to

pass the summer in her château; with her leave, we 'll pass it in her park. Let me arrange it."

Miss Rowrer had chosen a hill from which you could see the whole country-side. Then she sent for a house-furnisher, told him her plans, saying: "I want this—and this—and this." The tradesman remonstrated: "But, mademoiselle, that is never done!" She finished by making him understand, all the same, by dint of repeating, "I wish this! and this! and this!" At last, without any one knowing it except M. Rigois, who paid the bills, the camp was set up.

Several square tents, with a flooring of boards, had been raised amid the trees. When the door-flaps were drawn back, Japanese mats were to be seen, and, behind dainty screens, little brass bedsteads and rocking-chairs and toilet furniture.

The tent for Will and Phil had its beds concealed under Algerian rugs, which made lounges for the daytime. It served as a smoking-room for the dining-tent, which was set up alongside very simply, with an abundance of flowers in rustic vases. Farther back, hidden in the shrubbery, were the kitchen and offices. Near by there was an immense water-butt, ingeniously made to furnish each tent with an inexhaustible supply of fresh water. There was also a tent for the auto and for the saddle-horses, when needed.

"It is perfect, Ethel!" grandma said, looking around.

"I am well pleased with it, my dear grandma," Ethel acknowledged. "It is not as good as Tent City, on Coronado Beach at San Diego," she added, laughing, "but we shall be more at home here and the view is

superb. How do you find it, Phil? Will, are you pleased?" And she waved her hand to the horizon.

From their hilltop, across the river which wound below, they saw an immense plain. Its calm beauty impressed Ethel, fresh from noisy Paris. France had never seemed so large to her. Among the trees there were bell-towers rising above red roofs, and here and there high factory-chimneys crested with smoke. It was "the province," wide and active and silent.

In the distance, fields stretched away to the horizon. It was like an immense sea, with waves forever motionless. Wagons moved across it and boats glided along the waters of the river, and on the roads and in the fields members of the human ant-hill were stirring everywhere.

"It is beautiful," Phil said, "and I am grateful to you for having invited me. Here I shall paint from nature, and you, Miss Rowrer, ought to do delightful water-colors."

"What do you think of my landscape, Will?" Ethel asked her brother, who was examining the auto.

"It's all right—there's something wrong with my carbureter," answered Will. "I'll have to see to it at once. I'll look at the landscape later."

"That's just like Will!" Ethel remarked. "You talk landscape to him and he answers with carbureters and floaters and all the rest. If you only listened to him you'd think him the most earth-bound of mechanics. And in his heart he is a poet—yes, a poet! He has a little blue flower in his heart; perhaps it's a forget-me-not!"

"The dinner-bell is ringing," observed Will.

"Well, let 's to table!" Ethel said. "There 's nothing like forty miles an hour to give one an appetite."

The dinner was delicious. There were the country dishes—*soupe blanchie*, artichokes and beans, an eel in bouillon, stewed chicken and a salad, an ice and the fritters of the province. The middle of the table was decorated with a magnificent bouquet of roses, while all around were wild flowers of the fields. The cook hired by Mme. Riçois had done things well,—too well, indeed. Over and above the flowers, the table was furnished with as many bottles as in an inn.

"Take away those bottles of wine that litter up the table," Ethel said to the valet.

"But, mademoiselle, what are you going to drink?" asked the cook, who was standing near.

"We shall drink water—with ice in it."

"Water—with ice!"

"At every meal," Miss Rowrer added.

"But after your ice-cream—to warm up the stomach?"

"Ice-water!" said Ethel.

Over the cook's face there crept an expression of terror and pity. To console her, Ethel complimented her cookery, but the smile had vanished from the good woman's lips until they asked her recipe for the fritters.

"I 'll take it back to Chicago with me," said grandma. "We 'll give a german, and we 'll have pastry just like that on the sideboard. It will be a novelty."

Ethel, after the meal, pretended to light a cigarette, to put the men at their ease. Will picked out a cigar, and Phil, who patterned himself after Miss Rowrer, took

a whiff at a cigarette and threw it away. Then he picked up his banjo.

"Play us the 'Arkansaw Traveler'!" grandma asked. "The very turn of the tune makes me wish to dance."

Ethel spoke up: "What if we should map out our time for the two months we are to spend here? We have, first, the invitation from the countess and her friends—there are a *rallye-paper* and a *chasse à courre*."

"The hunt is much later—a few days before we leave for Morgania," observed Will.

"The good duke!" said Ethel; "it seems things are not going at all well in his country. Who knows? By the time we get to Morgania there may be neither duke nor duchy!"

"I'd rather be a trapper in the far West than a duke in such a country," said grandma.

"As for me," said Phil, stopping short the "Arkansaw Traveler," which he had been strumming lightly, "my picture is already there and I must put it up and retouch it on the spot. I shall go, whatever happens."

"Bravo!" Ethel answered. "'Whatever happens'! That's talking! One ought to know what one has to do, and then do it, whatever happens! But that has nothing to do with our camp," she went on, as she poured out a lemon squash. "We must see the Grojeans. I do hope dear Yvonne will come and sketch with me; and we must visit the country fair,—they tell me it is very curious. And then there will be our excursions, and photographs for our albums; and I must take a good deal of exercise. There are so many things to see that we shall have no time to bore ourselves."

The next day they completed the setting up of the camp. Ethel christened it "Camp Rosemont," looked over it with the eye of the master, and arranged everything for the meals. She had a flag-pole planted for the Stars and Stripes. The rumor ran through the country that circus people had come and were camping under a tent in the open. Curious villagers came and looked on from a distance, stretching out their necks.

"Let the children come!" Ethel said. She stuffed them with sweetmeats, spreading bread and butter with jelly for them with her own hands. The little girls amused her most, with their braided hair and simple gowns and little wooden shoes. She met an inborn politeness in them—the refinement of ancient days; they curtsied to her.

"You 'd say they were fresh from the company of princesses," was Ethel's appreciation. True enough, their games, the *volant*, the *grâces*, the dancing in a round, and the songs, in which they spoke of ladies and princes and knights, all told of the olden time of joust and tournament.

"How nice you all are," Ethel said to them. "Will you come often? You are not afraid of me?"

"Oh, no, mademoiselle!"

"Bring your little playmates. I shall always have cakes for you."

"Oh, no, mademoiselle!"

"What! You do not wish to eat my cakes?"

"Oh, not every day! Our parents would scold us! But you can tell us nice stories, and then you might give

us tickets for the circus. You must look pretty when you go riding horseback."

"So you think I 'm a circus-rider?"

"That 's what people say."

"Well, they are mistaken. I am,—I am"—Ethel did not find it easy to say just what she was. She could not say, "I am a painter," or, "I am a musician." So she contented herself with saying, "I am an American!"

"America—that is a country. Is it farther than Paris?"

"Oh, yes!"

"My papa has a machine to mow hay which comes from Chicago. Is that a city? Is it as big as the city yonder?"

"It is as big as all that!" Ethel said, opening her arms to the boundless horizon. "And three times as high as the tallest tree."

"My papa has been in Buenos Aires. Perhaps you saw him there?"

"Never."

"You were never bitten by serpents?"

"Never."

"Does everybody in your country sleep under tents as you do?"

"No; but in big, big houses."

"That must be fine."

"I 'll show you pictures, children, and tell you stories of my country and pretty stories of yours, too. Do you love your country very much?"

"France? Oh, yes!"



Ethel and the Little Peasant Girls



"You are right, darlings, and I love it also. It is a beautiful country, which we all love in America. But we sha'n't be friends any longer if you won't eat my cakes."

"Oh, yes, mademoiselle!"

Ringling laughter followed, and they ate the cakes, and there were games, and dances in which there was something of the majestic minuet and something of the light gavotte.

"It does me good to see how happy they are," Ethel said to herself. "Oh, how I should like to have all the world happy forever!"

They were to visit the Grojeans later, when everything should be finished at the camp. The countess had not yet arrived at her château, and Ethel profited by this to explore the country round about. Phil and Will, and even Caracal, who was living at the hotel, from time to time accompanied them. They made sketches and water-colors and talked over their impressions. In her walks Ethel wore a gray serge skirt adorned with large plaits, a bolero of the same stuff edged with white, silk shirt-waist, and a white straw hat; and with that she went up hill and down dale with the readiness of a college boy.

They saw France at home. The endless parceling out of properties and labor astonished them. Every one was half peasant and half workman, and had his own house and fields and vineyards. Thanks to the spirit of saving, want was unknown; and the variety of work made anything like a dead season impossible. When the workshop closed its doors, the workman took up his spade and cultivated his garden.

"I had no idea of anything like this," Will said, with deep interest. What a rest for him, who had just left Chicago and the business strife, to find himself in the open country, where everything smiled around him!

Sometimes they met a wedding-party on the way—the bride in white, the groom in black, the old men in their blouses. A fiddler, the village barber, marched at the head, scraping out airs of the good old time.

They talked with housewives who were twirling their spindles on the threshold. They were asked to enter, and saw the great chimney with its fire-dogs, on which the soup was heating, and the dresser with its colored crockery shining in the shadow. Chickens pecked at their feet. When Phil and Will sat down at the old oaken table to taste the *piquette* (light wine) a familiar magpie perched on their shoulders and asked its share.

Issuing forth, they met the "priest-eater" of the village offering a pinch of snuff to Monsieur le Curé. Boys were coming back from school, shouting and rattling military marches on imaginary drums. For the girls were dancing and the boys playing their soldier-games, just as in the days of yore, when only the brave deserved the fair.

On the village signs, names and trades bore witness to the antiquity of the race and the power of its traditions.

"What dignity there is in this people!" Ethel said to Will. "See the old goodman there, with his spade on his shoulder, how he saluted us as he passed by. Our people would think it servility, but it is far from that; it is like the refined greeting of a marquis who does the honors of his land."

Will thought long over this. All these villages were the same now as they had been in other days. They had always been the refuge of simple ideas, and brave hearts had been born and had died in them, content to consider the smoke of the horizon only from afar. These lowly lives had passed between the old church and the little cemetery on the hill, with its cypresses among the tombs.

"Yes, here we breathe to the full filial piety and the reverence of forefathers," Ethel said. "There is something good in all that, you know. You are right, M. Caracal, to prepare a romance on this country life. It's a beautiful subject and full of striking pictures. Look at that village before us, with its gardens cut by a network of hedges and walls, and at the roofs pressed one against the other as if they were afraid of the horizon, and the smoke mounting straight up to the sky."

"But all that smells of the stable," Caracal murmured, "the country—*pouah!*"

"It doesn't smell so strong as your Montmartre cafés," Phil whispered in his ear.

For his part, Phil was living strange days. The valley and hill and the woods he looked at mechanically, thinking of Miss Rowrer the while. The deep charm of the young woman possessed him more and more; he no longer tried to resist it. She had taken possession of him without knowing it. Her mind was large, cosmopolitan, human. All Phil's happiness was now in being at her disposition, in living near her, and seeing and hearing her. He felt that he grew morally in her presence, and he was more in love with her soul than with her beauty. When he walked through the country with her, he fan-

cied that Columbia herself was at his side, explaining France to him.

The feeling of his littleness in her presence gave him pain. He could not imagine himself letting her know what he felt, either by word or gesture—he would never dare. She was too immensely rich. Ah! if he only could, he would give all the riches of the world that she might be poor!

It was especially when evening came, with its melancholy, that such thoughts arose in him. One night, after dinner, Phil, to please grandma, took his banjo and played the "Arkansaw Traveler." The perfume of roses filled the tent, which was lighted dimly. The raised canvas showed a cloudless sky; the stars were rising and the crystal notes of the banjo were lost in the great silence.

"What a beautiful night!" said Ethel, "and how calm! It is like the infinite."

"But what are we in it all?" said Phil. "In a hundred years nothing of all this will remain; a new mankind will take the place of our own. We count no more than the flower or the drop of water."

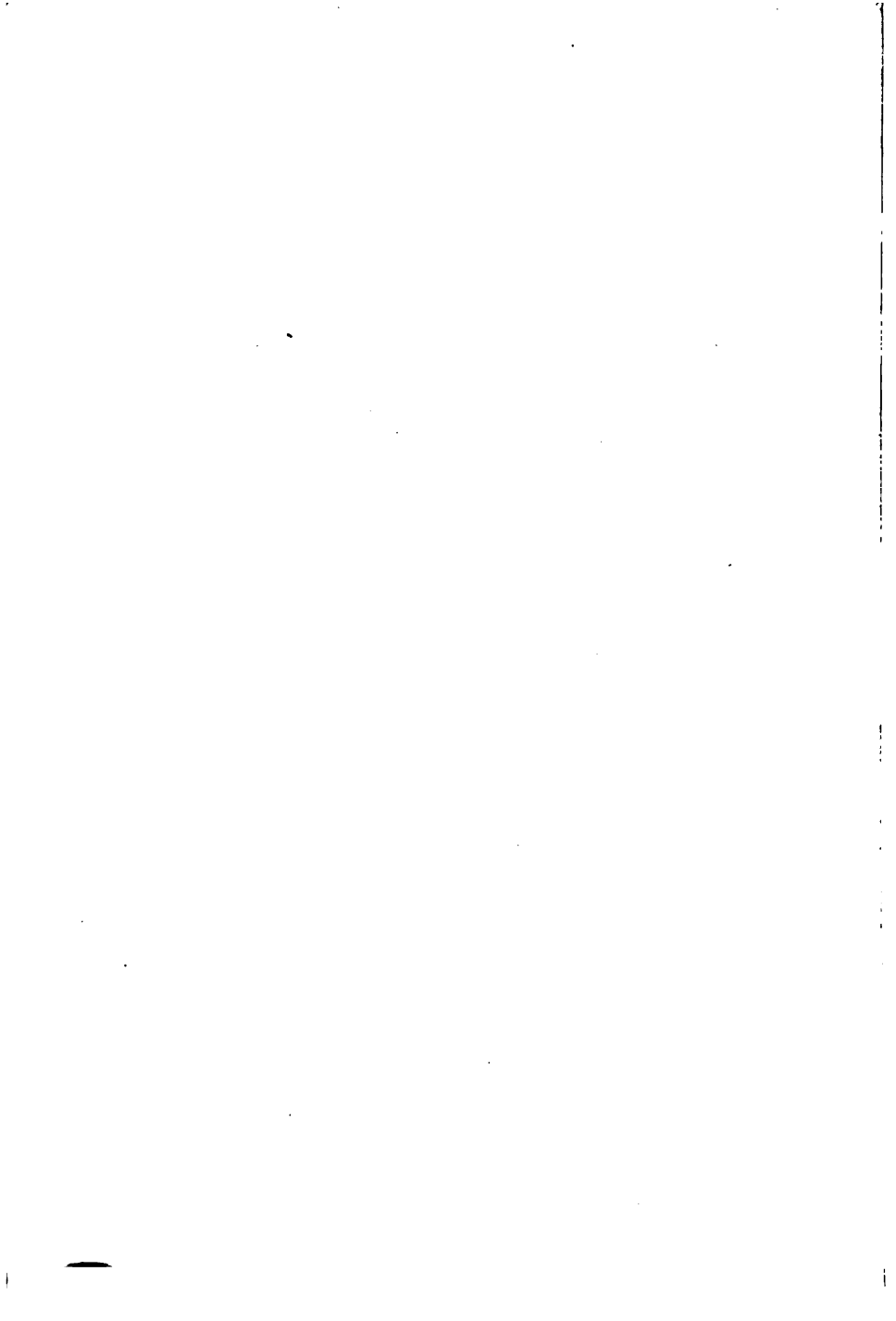
"No," Miss Rowrer answered; "I am more than a drop of water, and more than a blade of grass. How, Phil, can you speak that way? As for me, there are times when I feel myself the equal of the whole world."

"Miss Rowrer," said Phil, "the whole world itself is nothing to the infinite."

"And I say," replied the young girl, "that the end and aim of this whole boundless universe is the production and development of the soul, or, if you prefer it



Phil Listening to Ethel



that way, of consciousness in man's perishable body. How do you know that Alfred Russel Wallace is not right when he supposes the earth to be the center of the universe? The Bible always said so. What if science should prove it?"

"Frankly, now," remarked Will, who was smoking a bad cigar (and yet the brand bore his name—it was enough to disgust one with earthly grandeur) "frankly now, Ethel, can you suppose these little creatures that we are—"

"But I will not be a little creature!" cried Ethel. "The telescope seems to show that there is no such thing as an infinity of suns. Limited as they must be in number, they only form what is called a globular agglomeration, concentric with the Milky Way. I read that the other day. Our solar system is in the center of this agglomeration and so in the center of the Milky Way, which we see around us like a circle. And beyond, there is, perhaps, nothing at all. Our solar system is, then, in the center of the material universe; and this earth of ours—that which is nothing to the infinite, according to Phil—on the contrary, occupies so privileged a place near its central sun that here only, it is probable, life can have been developed and man created, and so the whole universe must have its fulfilment in us! What do you think of such a theory? I had rather believe that than be only a flower or a drop of water," Ethel concluded, as she arose.

From his corner in the shadow Phil saw her, in the full light of the lamp, standing out luminous against the dark horizon as if mingled with the stars. He admired her

superb self-confidence—why should he doubt himself? He vowed that before their departure for Morgania he would let Miss Rowrer know his feelings for her. Perhaps she suspected them a little. No matter, he would tell her! As an extreme limit, so much did he feel the need of binding himself, he fixed the time for his declaration at the stag hunt.

CHAPTER III

GRAND'MÈRE VERSUS GRANDMA

“**I** THOUGHT the Grojeans were absent—their house has been all the time shut up,” Caracal said to Ethel; “but I caught sight of them yesterday. They must be back.”

“We ’ll go to-day and invite them to tennis,” Ethel said. “It will give so much pleasure to Mademoiselle Yvonne—and perhaps Will might be glad to see her again,” Ethel added to herself.

In the afternoon the auto, in all its splendor, flew along the way to the home of the Grojeans.

Caracal was delighted. Miss Rowrer had been very gracious to him. He would have gone oftener to Camp Rosemont, but he had been content to shine from afar on account of the drafts and mosquitos under the accursed tents. He kept to his lodgings at the Lion d’Or, a little inn full of flies and smelling of cabbage-soup.

“What a beautiful road this is!” Ethel observed. “You would say it was an avenue in a park, everything has such a refined air, so prinked and pretty, with its flowers set here and there!”

Every one was impressed by the gardens of flowers and the finished, distinguished look of everything. Will

had the deepest enjoyment of it. His head may have been full of business, he may have handled his millions in his sleep, but he felt himself taken by this provincial charm. His love for it was the love of that which contrasts with one's self. When he saw the hills crowned with oak and the inclosures bordered with roses, the variegated fields alive with vine and corn, a sweet country and a strong one, whose people greeted him with smiles, he seemed to forget all care, to be reading a poem.

"Will," Ethel remarked, "is in love with France."

Caracal kept his impressions to himself. A loftier anxiety was weighing on him: "The House of Glass" was about to appear. It was a thunderbolt which would soon burst and he would be famous; and, after the town, the country should have its turn! His work should be the life-encyclopedia of our day. He already had notes on the mosquitos, remarks on the grunting of pigs in their sties and the smells of the manure-heap. His novel would begin well.

"Tell me, M. Caracal," Ethel chanced to ask just as he was thinking of all this, "have you found a title for your novel on country life which we were talking about the other day?"

"I am hunting for one, Miss Rowrer," answered Caracal.

"I hope every one will be allowed to read it, even young girls," she went on.

"Ah—" Caracal interrupted.

"Good!" Ethel said, "why should unpleasant things be written? Very dirty things some authors write, so

I hear it said. I don't understand this fouling of one's own nest."

Caracal hid his chagrin. To him a novel for the "young person"—a "proper" novel—was the lowest term of contempt. No, his would not be a rose-colored romance; it would be something that had been lived, thrilling with human passion, bleeding and fierce, even if it smelled of the stable and dung-hill—ah!—and he turned his Mephistophelian eye-glass toward the horizon.

A writer for young persons! The indignation which dictated his verses to Juvenal made Caracal find a title for his romance. "Let's see," he thought. "In fact, what title shall I give it? It must be something suggestive. For the city I have 'The House of Glass'; would 'The Pigsty' do for the country? No, they'd say it was a treatise on breeding. 'The Rose on the Dung-Hill'? No, they'd say it was poetry. 'Dung-Hill' alone is too short. 'Worms from the Dung-Hill'—that's the thing! comparing the country to a vast manure-heap with worms crawling through it."

Secretly satisfied with this stroke of his genius, Caracal rubbed his hands.

As they drew near the town, the houses, scattered at first and amid gardens, became more numerous. The camping-party now jolted over the "King's Pavement." At a distance, above the low roofs, the spires of a church were seen. All at once they came out in the place where a few days before, through the blinds, when the sun-fountain marked four o'clock, the Grojeans had watched their passing by.

"The Grojean house?" A person standing near

answered their inquiry: "It is the great doorway beyond there opening on the place."

Brrr! and the auto was in front of the house.

There was a great door, studded with big iron nails, and a little wicket, with a grating in front of it, opening in the thickness of the wood. The front of the house, smooth and with drawn blinds, had a venerable look. The stroke of the knocker resounded long, as if re-echoing through an empty house. A moment passed.

They had time to notice the fine grass which grew between the stones of the walk and the foot of the wall, and the old escutcheon carved above the door.

"It is the Grojeans' coat of arms," Ethel explained in a low voice. "They belonged to the old *noblesse de robe*. One grandfather was a presiding judge, another was a chancellor."

Just then the noise of the bolt was heard, the heavy door opened, and Mlle. de Grojean welcomed them on the threshold.

"I am delighted! What a pleasant surprise! You must excuse me for receiving you as I am. The servants have gone out and I was at work."

"But you are charming as you are!" answered Ethel.

Mlle. Yvonne was certainly very pretty in her bib and apron, with her graceful neck issuing from the wide white collar, and her refined head, with its hair rolled like a helmet above it.

"Do come in!" she exclaimed.

The hallway, paved with marble, and with its lofty ceiling, surprised them by its coolness. To right and left there were double doors. At one side rose a great stone

staircase with an iron railing and without carpet. On the wall there were a few old pictures, and these, with two benches of the time of Charles X, formed the furniture of the hall. At the foot, through a glass door, there was a view on a terrace leading down to the garden.

"Grand'mère, here are my Paris friends," Mlle. Yvonne said, as she brought the party into the salon: "Mme. Rowrer, Miss Rowrer, Monsieur William, Monsieur Phil Longwill."

Caracal kept himself to one side, smiling as if it were understood that he, a celebrated man, was superior to these poor children of the soil.

"M. Caracal, of Paris," Miss Rowrer said, presenting him. "M. Caracal has come to study the country. He is preparing a book."

"Ah! Monsieur is a professor of agriculture. You are welcome, monsieur," grand'mère said, with simplicity, leaving Caracal to that isolation which is the lot of psychologists once they leave the Boulevard.

"I shall surely put *you* into my novel!" Caracal muttered to himself, in his vexation.

"If I had known, I would have taken the covers from the chairs," said Mlle. Yvonne. "But sit down all the same, I beg of you. Mama will be very glad to see you. She is coming back. I will go fetch her."

"Don't mind, Yvonne," said Ethel; "we will wait. You know," she added, "everything is delightful to us here."

There was the same dim light on the silken hangings and the furniture, reflecting its brasses. The air was fine and sweet, like the fragrance of the caskets of our

grandmothers in family store-rooms. Through the windows, half open on the garden, they could hear the song of birds amid the groves.

Mme. de Grojean now came in. The chairs were moved from their formal rows and every one sat down. Conversation began.

The perfectly natural manners and air of high distinction of Mlle. Yvonne and Mme. de Grojean, found in the midst of their domestic occupations, were a pleasure to Will.

"You were working at this water-color?" Ethel asked of Mlle. Yvonne.

"No. I'm going to send that to a charity bazaar; but I was working at this."

"This muslin gown?"

"Not just now," said Yvonne, "I was scraping lint."

"Lint! For what?"

"Why, for some expedition they are preparing; for the next war."

Will and Ethel were in admiration at such simplicity of life, in which young girls sewed at their own muslin gowns for the yearly ball, and varied their employment by picking lint for the next war.

"Just imagine!" Ethel said to herself. "I pitied her in Paris because she never went anywhere! Quite the contrary, she must have been having a thoroughly good time. Those days must have been regular escapades, an excess of liberty, compared to this life of work and obscure duties."

She looked in turn at Yvonne, in her high spirits, at

her mother, who was so self-effacing, and at the rigid, conservative, severe grandmother.

"Have you many amusements here?" Ethel asked. "A theater, books, fine walks?"

"Oh!" answered Yvonne, "we hardly go to the theater—once or twice a year, perhaps—and we receive few books, we have so little time to read. But amusements are not wanting, I assure you. Sometimes I go to market, and there 's the care of the house, with preserves to make; there are the garden and the fruits. We must have an eye to everything."

"Yvonne is very whimsical, too," said grand'mère; "she wanted some canary birds! Nowadays, young girls have nothing but pleasure in their heads!"

"But birds are so amusing," replied Yvonne. "Just now," she added, "we are in a hurry with our gift to the soldiers—there are lint, preserves and tobacco and liqueurs, and linen to send them. We have a committee here, and we occupy ourselves with it at our monthly meetings. And when it is n't that, it 's something else. My cousin Henri accompanies me at the piano, or I read French history or some treatise on education. I have n't a minute to myself, especially here, because grand'mère is the president of the committee."

"Alas! what a different idea of the Frenchwoman psychological novelists have been giving!" was Phil's thought as he looked at Caracal, with his monocle glistening in the shadow.

"In your place, madame," said grandma, speaking directly to grand'mère, "I 'd start a committee for general disarmament."

Mme. de Grojean opened her eyes wide. Ethel, who saw the effect which had been produced, hastened to say, "Grandma is joking."

"Not at all, Ethel," replied grandma. "The country is very pretty, with its flowers and its soldiers; but I prefer our Western plains, and I 'd give all the military music in the world for our peaceful tunes."

Grand'mère and grandma were face to face; they formed a perfect contrast to each other.

Grandma seemed to have in her clear eyes the sheen of the sea and of the prairies, where new dawns had arisen for her. Incredible energy could be read on her nervous features. One would have said that she was still young and active, and full of ambition; and, if she was able to talk with grand'mère, it was because during the past months she had begun again to speak and read French with as much ardor as a school-girl. She did not feel herself growing old so long as she improved herself. She detested things which never changed, homes too shut in, too hushed a silence, and too passive obedience. Leaning forward, she looked into the eyes of grand'mère. The latter was the majestic representative of changeless things, of tradition that must not be touched. Of what use is it to learn so much, since all sin comes from knowledge? And why change, since all through the centuries men have gone to war, while women stayed at home and spun.

Seated squarely back in her arm-chair, she looked like a tower of the Middle Ages, ready for the assault. She prepared her batteries and took from her arsenal replies a thousand years old, with which to overwhelm the as-

sailant. To grandma asking, "Why not change?" grand'mère would answer, "What use to change?"

She had the proverbs of her ancestors all in line. Against the taste for travel she could throw this bomb: "Each in his place!" She would stifle the spirit of adventure with "A rolling stone gathers no moss!" Against the pursuit of progress her ammunition was ready: "The better is the enemy of the good." And the daring ones who would attempt to climb up, in the name of modern ambition and equality for all, would receive from her mitrailleuse: "There was a frog who tried to become as big as an ox, and who burst in the endeavor!"

Last of all, if the enemy should really force a way into the stronghold, she had the crushing reply: "*Ca ne se fait pas* [It is n't done]!"

But grandma was not to be intimidated, and her best argument was Ethel herself.

"In America," said grandma, "we have n't the same idea of education. It's the young girl's Paradise!"

"But I am very happy here," Yvonne said, smiling.

"Ignorance is bliss," grandma thought to herself.

"With us," Ethel said aloud, "a young girl like Yvonne, who has a taste for painting, would go to Paris to study."

"Ah! *Seigneur!* how could you imagine my going to live in Paris at my age!" exclaimed Yvonne's mother.

"But you would remain here," grandma said. "Your daughter would go alone."

"*Est-il possible!*" grand'mère exclaimed.

"It is so pleasant," grandma went on, "to have the whole world before you; it is so exciting to be in the

strife and to feel one's self alive at twenty. It is done every day with us and we are none the worse for it. On the contrary—"

"That I can see," grand'mère admitted, looking at Ethel. Grand'mère found her charming, and could not understand how a young girl brought up with such liberty should be so nice.

Grandma continued: "The will ought to develop itself freely, just like the body. Women must know how to deliberate, to be fit companions for strong men; and a young girl ought to have some experience of life to make her way later and to choose her husband."

"To choose a husband!" grand'mère cried; "but I suppose that is the parents' concern?"

"Well, I declare!" was the answer of grandma, who did not declare often.

Yvonne was beginning to ask herself whether, since they were talking of husbands, they would not, quite by chance, send her to look for something which had been forgotten on the garden bench.

Ethel, to get away from the subject, spoke up: "Mme. de Grojean, I have a great favor to ask of you."

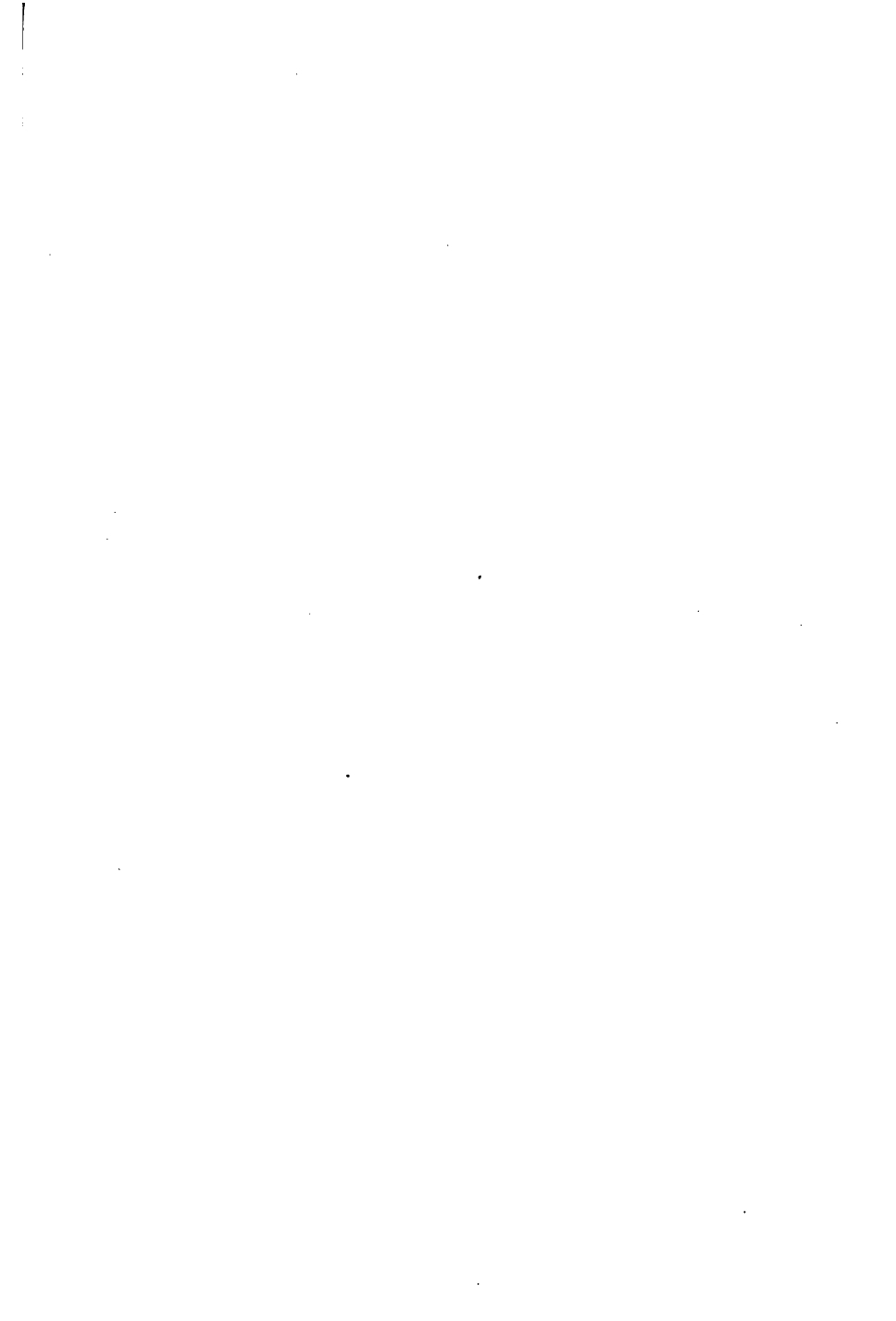
"I grant it in advance," said Mme. Grojean.

"It is this," said Ethel. "We are camping in the grounds of the Comtesse de Donjeon. Oh! the establishment is quite simple, and more agreeable than a hotel, I assure you. We go fishing and walking and painting; we play the banjo. It is so pleasant to live in the open air, and I would be so glad if Yvonne could come with us. We should amuse ourselves so much."

"And it would be so good to have these young people



"They went down into the garden"



around me," grandma added. "I love life and movement."

"We shall go about the country in our auto," Ethel continued. "We shall get up picnics, we shall have impromptu plays, with lanterns, when we have guests of an evening; and I count on Yvonne, Mme. de Grojean. It is granted in advance!"

"I should like it, if mama pleases," ventured Yvonne, with a blush of pleasure.

"It is for grand'mère to decide, my dear Yvonne. Ask grand'mère. I am willing, if she is."

The judge was about to pronounce. She meditated a moment. Mme. Rowrer and Miss Ethel were very kind, it was true. But would they always be present to look after Yvonne? Might not Yvonne sometimes go out alone with Monsieur William or Monsieur Phil? Her granddaughter walking with men! She hesitated no longer.

"It is impossible," she said. "I thank you very much, Mlle. Rowrer, but it is impossible."

The judge had pronounced, without appeal!

"Ah!" thought Ethel, "I understand how a young girl in France should take the husband they choose for her with eyes shut. It is to her own interest to escape from such family tyranny."

"But we shall go to see Miss Ethel?" Yvonne asked.

"Oh, certainly! We shall go to pass an afternoon with you," Mme. de Grojean said, encouraged by an indulgent smile from grand'mère, who, seated squarely in her arm-chair, murmured between her lips:

"Ah! how insatiable for pleasure young people are nowadays! As if birds and flowers in the garden were

not enough! Soon we shall have girls playing like boys; they will talk of the theater and sport, of tennis and bicycles—horror!”

Yvonne, gay as usual, and without any expression of bitterness, spoke low with her grandmother.

“Grand’mère, what if I should prepare a light collation for our visitors?”

“You are right, my child,” said grand’mère; “here is the key of the preserve pantry.”

Every one was now talking. A visitor had just made her appearance—Mme. Riçois, the banker’s wife, alert and dimpling, as usual. Phil, Will, and Mme. de Grojean talked pleasantly together. Caracal, with an air of great importance, talked of bric-à-brac to Mme. Riçois. Grand’mère and grandma made peace together. They found an admirable common ground of interest. Grand’mère showed grandma, who looked at them like a connoisseur, the photographs of her grandchildren, boys and girls, and grand-nephews and -nieces. Grandma gave grand’mère a recipe for home-made pie.

“The collation is ready,” Yvonne said, as she opened from without one of the long windows on the terrace. Her joyful voice sounded through the salon as the floods of light came in with the perfume of mignonette and roses.

“Grand’mère,” Yvonne went on, “I have spread the collation under the arbor by the waterside. Is that right?”

“You have done well, my child,” said grand’mère.

Mlle. Yvonne smiled with pride, like a soldier receiving his general’s compliment. Without any more ado, they

all crossed the terrace and went down into the garden. It stretched out with straight alleys bordered by cut box; and at each side thick trees isolated it from the rest of the world. In the center there was a little basin of rock-work. At the bottom of the garden, along the riverside, a trellis-work formed a shady arbor—a nook of dainty freshness. As they went down to it Yvonne threw bread-crumbs to the goldfish in the basin, and then showed her flower-borders, in which the blue and white and red blossoms were like a tricolor flag.

“I water them myself,” said Yvonne.

The table was spread under a trellis covered with honeysuckle. There were biscuits and preserves, fruits, cool water, liqueurs and wine and beer—all set out in perfect taste.

Yvonne served every one.

“Did you prepare all this yourself?” Ethel asked, in wonder. “And you also found time to adorn the table with flowers—you are a real fairy!”

A balustrade, over which ivy was growing, separated them from the river. On the other side of the water there spread out a vast plain, in which factory-chimneys were smoking.

“Only look at the contrast!” Ethel said, pointing to the plain across the river. “You would say it was America; while here, in this old garden, surrounded by walls, with Yvonne beside her flower-beds and all these savory fruits and beautiful golden grapes on their palings, I seem to be looking at old France!”

“Here ’s to France!” Will said, lifting his glass, full of clear water.

"To America!" Yvonne replied, pouring out for herself a little white wine.

"To our alliance!" said the alert and dimpling Mme. Riçois, as she tossed down her glass of champagne, while the rest of the party, including grandma and grand'mère, gaily attacked the cakes and fruits.

"It's understood, then, is n't it, madame?" Ethel said to grand'mère, "we can count on Yvonne for an afternoon, and, if you are willing, we shall go together to see the fair."

"It is understood," answered grand'mère; "and we will go into the booths and the circus, too—and you must come also, Mme. Riçois. It will be a fête-day for us!"

"With pleasure," said Mme. Riçois, filling her glass again in honor of the alliance.

CHAPTER IV

THROUGH THE COUNTRY FAIR

THE camping-party and the Grojeans were doing the fair. At the foot of the platform, before the circus door, an open-mouthed circle listened to the girl-clown dressed as Pierrette. All around, under the burning sun, tents had been set up, painted in bright colors. Groaning trombones proclaimed the wrestlers and the bearded woman. Other mountebanks farther on attracted the public toward their own side-shows. To the notes of an orchestrion, wooden horses turned rigidly against a cotton-print background, spangled with mirrors. Cries and laughter were heard above all the rumbling of the drums. Far and wide rose the discordant noise, especially that of the market for domestic animals, where the high "do" of squealing pigs quite mastered the muffled bass of the oxen.

Everywhere there was something to see. But the Pierrette was so pretty that the public disdained the rest and thronged around her, fascinated by her air of good-fellowship, and her young, fresh laughter.

"Now 's the time! Now 's the time!" the Pierrette cried, while, behind her on the platform, circus-riders and clowns, and the master in person, Signor Perbaccho,

listened gravely to her. "Come in! Come in! Let us show you an animal that has been well trained—but not without difficulty, for he is stupid enough to make soup of smoked beetles!

"Oh, you need n't think it just happened!" the Pierrette ran on, making gestures with her stick. "To begin with, such animals exist only in Paris—Paris on the Seine, you understand; a big village where all the pebbles are diamonds and the trees are gold, but you don't dig potatoes there! To live there your loafers have to become sculptors and painters and musicians. Their heads are as empty as their stomachs! Mesdames et messieurs, I am going to show you one of those animals. Don't throw him anything, I beseech you—no bread-crusts, no cabbage-leaves; he ate yesterday! Attention! Here he comes! Come hither, my fly-killer! Come when you are called."

There were bursts of laughter as the Pierrette stretched out her arm and seized a man by the ear, whirling him around and bringing him, ashamed enough, to face the public. She might have been a marquise disguised as a soubrette, playing in comedy with a clumsy rustic. The man turned red as a tomato.

"Have you made your bread-winner shine to-day? Did you scrub it with pumice powder? Answer!" said the Pierrette.

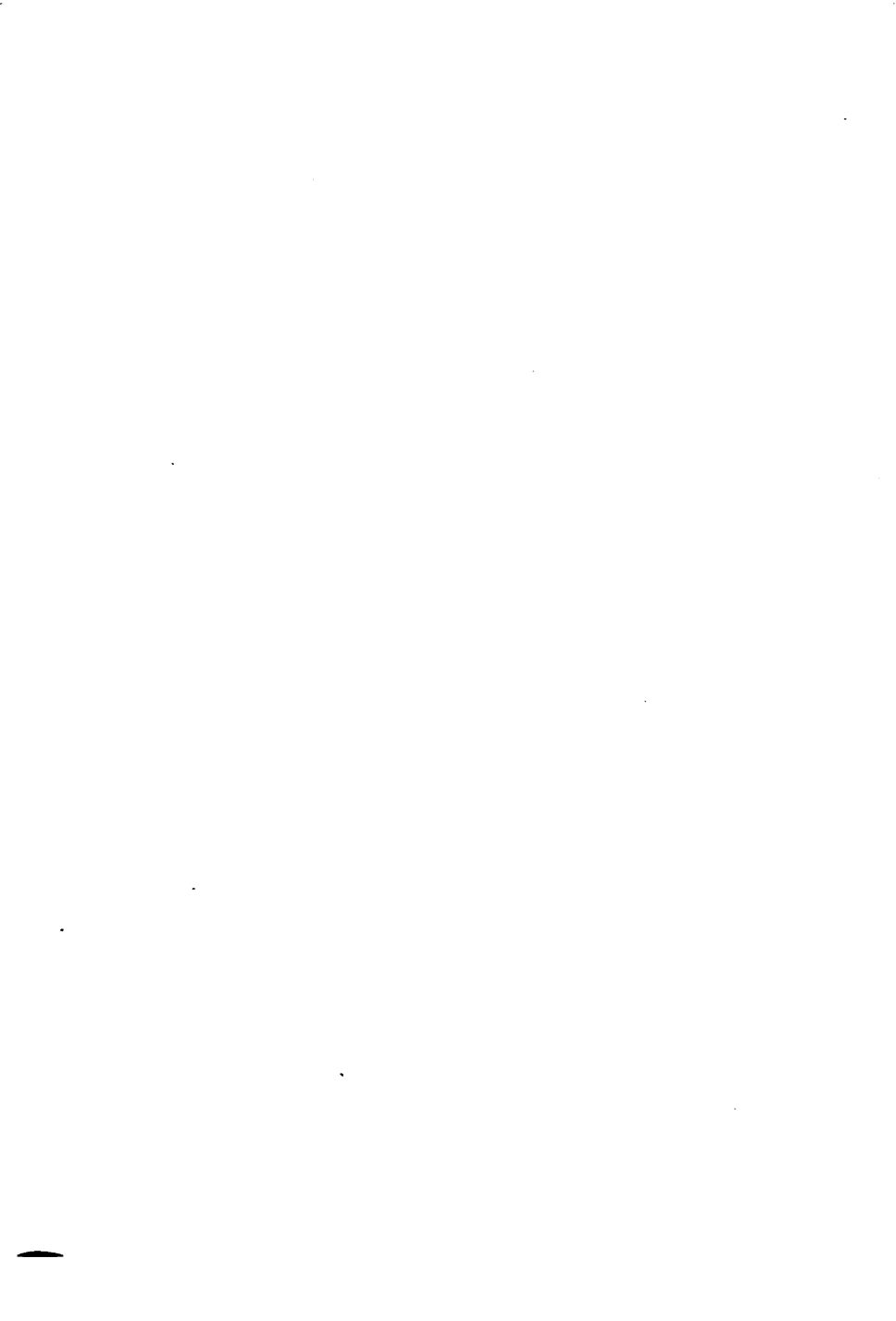
"Yes!" grunted the man, shaking his head like a bear.

"Let 's see!"

The man took off his hat, showing a skull of dazzling whiteness, shining above his hairy brown face like a piece of crockery on a cocoanut.



Suzanne and Poufaille at the Country Fair



"Bow to the honorable company!" said the Pierrette. "Not so low! if they see your skull that way, they 'll think your breeches are torn at the knee. Now, stand up! To work, old fly-killer!

"Mesdames et messieurs," the Pierrette said, pretending to roll up her sleeves and get her stick ready, "it 's not so easy as that to kill flies—unless your breath has alcohol enough in it to make them fall in a fit! As for me, I have discovered the means, without drinking, to rid myself of the treacherous gluttonous flies! Do you want my recipe? Here it is. You take a bald-headed man, very delicately—there! like that!—you spread on a layer of molasses and bird-lime, and then flies and wasps, mosquitos and gnats, every insect with a sucker, will light down on the human fly-trap; and then, —then, mesdames,—I address my words to you!—you take a broomstick and hit hard where the molasses is thickest! There! like that! *Aïe donc! vlan! pan!* till the flies are a jelly—*pan! pan!*—hit him again! that 's the way to kill flies and treat men as they deserve—with a broomstick—*et aïe donc!*"

"What! Suzanne and Poufaille!" exclaimed Phil, getting nearer the platform. The camping-party, followed by the Grojeans, joined him just as Poufaille, covered with molasses and shame, escaped from his executioner and dived back behind the canvas. Suzanne, full of excitement from her bastinade, stamped her feet, and with voice and gesture invited the public to come up and buy their places. High above the noise of the band her piercing voice called out the program:

"Riding of the *haute école* by the celebrated Per-

baccho! The dance of the sylphs by Mademoiselle Suzanne, pupil of the famous Helia! Hercules O'Poufaille, of the family of O'Poufaillès! Come in! Come in!"

Phil was greatly astonished. He had not seen Poufaille since the evening when the latter, with his eyes starting from his head, had cast at him the terrible accusation—"You have stolen from me my share of glory!"

"So he 's made himself a Hercules of the fair," thought Phil, "and he 's made his name Irish! What a fall for an *autochtone*!"

"Phil," asked Ethel, who had stopped in front of the Pierrette, "would n't you say it was Suzanne? And here on the poster is O'Poufaille—it must be M. Poufaille! Decidedly, Tout-Paris has given itself a rendezvous in the provinces!"

"What—do you know those people?" grand'mère asked of Ethel. "I suppose you saw them in some circus!"

"I saw them in Paris—at the Louvre and at Monsieur Phil's studio. They are good, brave hearts. Suzanne has posed for me and so did the famous Helia, whose portrait Yvonne did."

"Impossible!"

"Why, yes, grand'mère," Yvonne said. "That head of a Madonna—the miniature which you keep on your prie-dieu, don't you know?—Mlle. Helia posed for it."

"A Madonna copied from devils like that?" gasped grand'mère, amazed at the Pierrette's gesticulations on the platform. "What! you bring such people into your house! You are not afraid?"

"I?" answered Ethel; "no fear at all! I would give them the key of my desk! Mme. Grojean, only ask Monsieur Phil, who knows them better than I. Every one earns his living as he can. Each one has his trade—and God for us all!"

"When you go to see them—for I hope you are going to see them," Ethel continued, speaking to Phil, "remember me to them, and you will oblige me much! If M. Poufaille still has a picture to sell, I will buy it. Poor M. Poufaille!" she added. "After all, he might have succeeded, who knows? It is all such a question of chance!"

Phil, in his heart, did not care much about seeing Poufaille again; what sort of a welcome was there in store for him? But he could not explain all that to Miss Rowrer; and, besides, her desires were orders for him—and then, he would come to Poufaille bearing the gifts of Artaxerxes; that would calm him, no doubt.

"I do not blush for my friends, Miss Rowrer," Phil said. "I will go this instant. The good fellow will be very glad to have your order."

"We shall see you later," answered Ethel.

The camping-party continued its stroll through the fair in two distinct groups. Behind were grandma and grand'mère, talking familiarly together. The piping-time of peace had come with currant-syrup under the arbor by the riverside. Mme. Riçois, full of smiles, fat and dimpling, came and went like a diplomatic valise between the group ahead,—Ethel, Yvonne, and Will,—and the group behind, grandma and grand'mère. These

two elegant groups formed a phalanx, bannered by parasols, in the midst of the crowd in blue blouses.

They went along the principal part of the fair, a sort of central alley, which the circus blocked at one end, whereas, at the other end, under dusty trees, the show of domestic animals was lined up. From all parts arose a continuous confusion of sounds, like the murmur of the sea.

"What a noise!" grand'mère exclaimed. She was accustomed to her silent house, between the deserted place and the garden with its clipped yew-trees. "But there 's no harm in passing by such a Jericho now and then—it disgusts you with noise for a year to come!"

Just then Mme. Riçois came up, breathing hard.

"Oh, no! It 's too funny! I never saw Yvonne amuse herself so much. Ah! how gay these young people are! Do you know what M. Rowrer has been telling us? He declares that the country, even on a fair-day like this, soothes his nerves. Miss Rowrer is of the same opinion; they are as merry as children."

"Perhaps they are too merry," grand'mère thought to herself. "What an idea of my daughter's to stay at the house for her preserves, and to leave me alone to look after Yvonne. Really, she chose her time well; was it so necessary for Yvonne to come here and admire the fronts of the booths? Ah! nowadays young people never have their fill of pleasure!"

To calm her conscience, grand'mère said to herself that it was all right for once, but that it should not happen again. Mme. Riçois spoke the truth. They were amusing themselves very much there in front—a great

deal too much for grand'mère. Will was as gay as a boy let loose from school.

In comparison with such a provincial fête, Chicago, as he remembered it, made on him the effect of a machine-shop full of the noise of steam-hammers. Taking out his watch, he thought how at that very hour he might have been at the Stock Exchange, worried with business, in the midst of frenzied outcries and distorted faces; whereas, here there were only smiles and gaiety. Every one seemed happy, even the poorest; and the tumult was that of good-fellowship. Joyous vine-dressers were buying baskets for their grapes. Farther along, waffles were frying. Here they were selling cooked sausages; and expansive mouths were emptying their glasses or biting into loaves of bread.

"Here are people," Will said, "who know how to amuse themselves."

"Is it a secret, monsieur?" asked Yvonne.

"To be content with what one has," answered Will. "You have a French proverb about it: '*S'il n'y en a pas, il n'en faut pas*' ['What you can't have, you don't need']—and that is right—don't you think so, mademoiselle?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Yvonne; "you seem to know the French people better than I."

The rare charm of Mlle. de Grojean, her innate simplicity and inherited refinement, seemed to Will like the perfect expression of all he loved in France. He, who was so taciturn, would have talked on for hours only to see the manner, at once coquettish and reserved, with which Yvonne listened to him.

"My impression of France is this," said Will: "it is holiday every day, and the next day you begin again."

"You see everything in rose-color, M. Rowrer," Yvonne remarked.

"No," said Ethel, who, in her walks around the camp, had often visited the poor—"no, it 's not all the time holiday for everybody."

"I know that, too," Will replied; "life is as hard here as anywhere else; but it is the only country where you can give yourself the illusion that it is easy."

They had come to the end of the central alley. Followed by grand'mère and grandma, they had passed by the Pretty Shepherdess of the Alps—a woman of formidable proportions painted on canvas, in company with three white goats, not far from the booth of the bearded woman. Just there the group behind would have lost the forward group, if it had not been for Mme. Riçois, who elbowed her way with energy through the crowd, which, at this spot, pressed together like the current in a narrow strait. An immense lottery-wheel was turning with a noise like the wind.

The day drew on, and the peasants were already leading away their cattle. They went along in single file, in front of their yoked oxen, slow as a procession. The dust they raised settled on the trees in white powder.

"You may say what you please, Will," Ethel continued; "it may be all very peaceable if you compare it with the Stock Exchange, but it 's not so compared with Camp Rosemont."

"We shall go to see you soon," said Mlle. Yvonne;

"you know that every one is talking about it in the town. They tell wonders of it!"

"I am sorry you cannot come to stay with us, Yvonne. I so wish you had been there the other day. I got up an open-air lunch for the village children; and the way they played and laughed! We wound up everything by dancing a great round. Sometimes autos come; and you 'd almost think you were at a gymkhana of the Bois de Boulogne. Then I 've begun my water-colors again. If you would come, Yvonne, we 'd make Suzanne pose in her costume as a Pierrette."

"*Ce diable!* That 's what grand'mère would say. She 'd never be willing!"

"But we should be with you, you know—no ugly man—"

"With an exception for me, I hope?" Will put in.

"And if Suzanne or Helia should pose, after all, what harm could there be?" continued Ethel. "I know very well there are prejudices,—and don't let 's be too severe on them; prejudice is the counterfeit brother of good sense; hump-backed and with horns, sometimes even without pity. Think of Helia, who wears a more than royal or imperial mantle—beauty! It is impossible that so much beauty should not go along with virtue also; and yet, no!—*un diable*, Mme. de Grojean would say!"

"Ah!—in such a profession!" said Yvonne.

"Ah!" said Ethel; "if Helia were an actress or a singer, she would wear crowns and recite high-sounding verses; and the poets would give her prestige in real life. But she has neither diamonds nor jewels; with

her full complement of arms, she is only a Venus de Milo in a silk maillot!"

"You are jesting, Ethel," said Will. "You are not going to compare gymnastics with dramatic art?"

"Why not? Do you know anything more beautiful than a beautiful gesture? What comedy, what drama can moralize us more than beauty which makes us blush for our own ugliness, and for our poor limbs, like consumptive chickens or stuffed turkeys! It is the training-school of the will and of energy."

"If she were beautiful as Venus," Will retorted, "I'd never choose for a wife an acrobat, offering me her heart with a triple high leap."

"Of course," said Ethel, "and you would be right; each one in his own sphere. That is one of the conditions of happiness, and society with us has intangible laws which only the unclassed and the *blasé* venture to break. We do not live in the East, where slaves become queens,—not even in Morgania, a country of icons and superstition; in such countries anything is natural, the only rule being the good pleasure of the master. After all, it is one prejudice instead of another!"

Phil now came to find them. He had recognized them, from a distance, in the crowd, by the shimmering of their parasols. He recounted to Ethel his interview with Poufaille. He looked delighted; everything must have passed off well.

"There are prejudices everywhere," Ethel went on. "Yourself, Yvonne—do you never stand out against prejudice? I will take Monsieur Phil for witness."

"In what, please?" Yvonne asked.

“For one example, in walking with us among hundreds of men,—those fearful men of whom you spoke with such terror in Phil’s studio; don’t you remember?”

“Oh,” said Yvonne, looking around her indifferently, “these good country people in their blue blouses? It was not that I meant, Miss Ethel.”

“Then men in blue blouses are not men?” Ethel answered, laughing. “It ’s like women in maillots,—they don’t count! What do you think, Phil?”

CHAPTER V

A BANQUET ON THE SAWDUST

POUFAILLE and Phil were now friends again—really they had been so for some time, ever since the day when Phil had taken to Poufaille Ethel's order for a picture. Poufaille was incapable of nursing wrath, and received Phil with open arms. The two *compains* squeezed each other's hands.

"Good old Phil!" Poufaille exclaimed; and Phil answered: "Good old Poufaille!"

And they did not speak once of their old quarrel until the day when the artistes had their banquet in the ring of the circus itself.

Phil had a great deal of amusement that day. Suzanne beggared description, and Poufaille was a show in himself, standing up, glass in hand, and singing the glory of the vintage. With a gesture, he snatched his collar from his shirt.

"It chokes me! I can't give the trills!" he said, for the trills were the strong point of this garlic-eater and roller of *r*'s from the South. So he thundered out his song in honor of wine and vine, of vats and presses, and of the good hot blood of the good old wine-drinkers. Around the table all the voices took up the refrain, but they could not drown the terrible voice of Poufaille,

which rumbled and rolled, covering all the rest as the noise of thunder covers the twittering of sparrows.

“Buveurs de vin—couchez dans la poussière
Ces buveurs de bière!”

(“Wine drinkers, throw down in the dust
All drinkers of beer!”)

Scornful laughter shook his sides, and he struggled to give his good-natured voice a diabolical, biting tone, as he repeated, looking at Phil:

“Ces buveurs de bière!”

Poufaille, excited by the wine, had a look of fury. But when he had finished, his shaggy eyebrows grew peaceful, and a smile spread all at once over his big, good-natured face.

“You ’re not angry at me, I hope?” he said to Phil, patting him on the shoulder. “What I said about beer-drinkers does not vex you—*hein?*”

“It does n’t touch me,” answered Phil, “for I only drink water!”

“True, so you do, poor fellow!” Poufaille said in a tone of pity. “Good old Phil!”

“Good old Poufaille,” Phil replied, “sing whatever you wish; we sha’n’t quarrel for that!”

Poufaille was reassured, filled up his glass, and emptied it at a draught.

“Look out,” said Phil, “you ’ll drink too much.”

“Let me be; I need it,” Poufaille answered; and it was almost with a gesture of despair that he filled his glass again. Those around them, also, were not drink-

ing water. Phil had done things on a large scale. He had ordered champagne—as much champagne as they wished. A full glass was offered to Poufaille, but he refused it.

“Champagne? *Pouah!* That is a wine for foreigners!” he explained. “Give me good old red wine—and let me drink till my thirst is quenched!”

On the table—or rather on the jumping-board of the circus, which stood on props with its chalk-powder giving the illusion of a white cloth—there was a mass of dishes and plates and empty bottles. It had been spread in the very middle of the ring—in the good odor of sawdust. Around the table, seated on the chairs of equilibrists, or on the stools of hand-balancers, were the circus artistes and a few invited guests. They had laughed a great deal during the banquet, before the time came for the songs and toasts.

“We all look as if we had the plague!” Suzanne said, by way of appetizer, pointing to the color of the faces under the green reflected light of the tent. Thereupon Poufaille grew livid, in his constant terror of the most imaginary ailments—stoppage of the blood, wind, stiff neck, plague, and cholera.

“Shut off the draughts of air!” he cried, “we ’ll all get our death!”

He all but fainted with fear as he saw, in front of him, his plate rising up in the air without his touching it.

“My plate! my plate is going away!” he stammered, in terror.

“Oh! what is the matter?” Suzanne cried. “I can’t



The Banquet in the Ring of the Circus

understand it—perhaps a snake has got loose from the menagerie next door!”

“Help! .Help!” Poufaille sputtered, ready to faint.

“What are you afraid of?” said Perbaccho, the master of the show. “Don’t you see that it is only Suzanne playing tricks on you?”

“Oh, it ’s all right, then!” Poufaille said, recovering his assurance. “She ’s been playing me all sorts of tricks lately—not counting the strokes of the broom-stick!”

In fact, Suzanne had brought out her whole repertory of practical jokes—liquids that flame up, powder which, thrown into a ragout, crawls about in the shape of a worm, pasteboard mice that run across the table, papier-mâché fruits and cheeses, and paste sweetmeats. The lunch was one long burst of laughter.

When the dessert came Perbaccho, the master, arose, glass in hand.

“To the health of Monsieur Phil!” he said.

“Here ’s to his health!” repeated the guests around the jumping-board.

“Vive Monsieur Phil!” said the children, who were sitting farther on, at a little table with spangled velvet fringe, on which, during his performances, the juggler placed his balls and knives. Sœurette was there; Helia had brought her, although she was too great an artiste to show herself at Perbaccho’s circus. She had come to the country to be near Suzanne and to rest.

“Dear friends,” Perbaccho went on, in the same voice with which he announced his Grrrand Representations, “the time has come to thank Monsieur Phil for the great

and numerous services which he has rendered us. [Applause.] Now that Monsieur Phil is going to leave us, we do not wish to let him depart without saying to him—hum, hum—how grateful we are for his having been willing to put his talents at our disposition. [“Bravo!”] Hum, hum—although Monsieur Phil has not yet set up for himself in the fairs, nevertheless he is a real artiste; and the delighted public looks with great pleasure—I will even say with enchantment—at the portrait which decorates our platform and represents Mademoiselle Suzanne of the O’Poufaille Family!”

“Vive la joie!” Suzanne began.

“Hear! hear!”

“Also Monsieur Poufaille’s portrait in his exercises of strength.”

“Bravo!” cried Poufaille, squeezing Phil’s hand hard enough to crush it.

“Mesdames et messieurs,” Perbaccho continued, “my modest establishment does not permit me to offer Phil, the artiste, that salary to which he has a right to pretend; but let not that prevent us from drinking his health. Come now, mesdames et messieurs, here ’s to the health of Monsieur Phil!”

It was not a thing which had to be repeated; every one drank to Phil’s health; and Phil returned thanks.

Phil enjoyed the popularity he had won by his friendliness to such good people. It was true—to please Suzanne, he had done her portrait with a few hours’ work. Yet Suzanne did not welcome him, as she had done in the old times, with a “Good day, Phil! Roll me a cigarette, *mon petit!*” Even her monkeyshines

ceased in his presence; this was something he did not understand. He had also painted Poufaille as a Hercules, lifting enormous weights. Moreover, he had rendered light services to all this little world of the fair. He had his recompense. He had entered most intimately into the life of the little world. His album had been enriched by any number of sketches and types, by picturesque interiors as somber and stirring with life as those of Rembrandt. He had daring foreshortenings of gymnasts at the trapeze, of handsome boys and pretty girls with muscles like antique statues.

Every one admired the strength and address with which a simple amateur like Phil handled the dumbbells or climbed the smooth rope. They were only astonished that, with a talent like his, he did not open a place for himself to do portraits at four or five francs apiece—that would bring him in a good day's earnings; and this would not include the pupils who would be with him from time to time—they had seen some of them at the fair with him. He might open a permanent Beauty Exhibition; there was that big blonde, especially—but they never spoke to him about that. They were completely ignorant of whom he was or whom his friends were. Suzanne, flighty as she was, was discretion itself on this point, and there was no danger of Poufaille talking when Suzanne forbade him. No one suspected that the big blonde was rich enough to buy up the circus and its artistes with it, and Signor Perbaccho to boot, as well as all the side-shows and the whole fair, and the houses round about the fair. They did not even know her name. As to Phil, when they met him in the circus-

tent, or with the wrestlers, making his sketches, they treated him like any other comrade.

The Rowers' yacht was to sail for Morgania in a few days, taking away the whole party, after two months at Camp Rosemont. Before his departure Phil wished to give pleasure to Poufaille and his friends by this luncheon with him. They yielded to his insistence, and accepted without ceremony. It gave him little trouble, and he brought his box and canvas to finish a study near by in the fields. This was a present he wished to offer to Ethel, and it reminded him of the pastimes of other days.

On the morrow, during the hunt—on the morrow, he had promised, he had sworn it to himself, and the moment was drawing near—no power in the world could hinder him—and yet how anxious he was! He was already in a fever and occupied himself with this lunch only to distract his thoughts, to prove to himself that he was calm and reasonable, that he had not lost his head. He looked at the groups around the jumping-board which had been turned into a table, and thought of the morrow. He surprised himself repeating in a low tone: "To-morrow!"

"What are you giving us with your 'To-morrow'?" asked Poufaille, who overheard it. "Perhaps to-morrow others and not we shall be drinking the wine. I know no to-morrow but to-day! I tell you it's drinking water that makes you sad and dreamy."

"And you—is it wine that makes you so gay?" Phil retorted.

"Well, I have little reason to be gay," Poufaille re-

plied. "If I drink, it is to stun myself. See here, do you want me to tell you?—but what use would it be! He who lives will see. By the way, you know that Helia has come back with Sœurette. She 's in town for a few days."

"What!" Phil exclaimed; "how is it she is not here?"

"She was tired," replied Poufaille. "But, *entre nous*, Phil, you 'd just as lief she should n't be here—eh?"

"But why?" Phil asked.

Poufaille was on the point of speaking, but some one at the end of the table called out with all his might:

"Farine! farine!
Embrassez votre voisine!"

It was the gallant refrain which winds up rustic feasts. Around the board all the women lent themselves with good grace to the custom. Poufaille devoured Suzanne with his eyes.

"Here 's your time," Phil said to him. "What are you waiting for? Kiss her now, kiss her; she owes you as much as that!"

"Kiss her?" Poufaille said, looking at Phil gloomily. "Are you making fun of me? She has n't let me kiss her for more than a month; she 's furious against every one—against myself!"

"Oh, now!" said Phil, "Suzanne furious? She would n't be so gay."

"I tell you she is; and I can see it. Do you think it gives me pleasure to take the blows of a broomstick on my head? The stick is light, it is true, and I have a false pigskin skull; but never mind! is that a trade?

You knew me and you knew her. I was the creator of 'Liberty' and 'Fraternity'; and now you see what I am—a fly-killer! It's flattering, *hein?* To be a fly-killer when I feel within myself the soul of a lion!"

"Keep up your hopes," Phil answered; "all that will change."

"'Keep up your hopes'! But you know nothing about it," Poufaille hurried on with his tragic voice; "oh, Suzanne strikes hard with her *âie donc!* But the hardest is that I should pay up for others. Oh, yes; I receive blows which ought to have been for you!"

"For me?" Phil gasped.

"Yes, for you—which ought to have been for you—for you—you hear?" and Poufaille shook Phil by the coat collar. "I tell you, it's your fault!"

"You must be crazy," Phil answered. "What have I done?"

"What have you done?" Poufaille continued, in the excitement of his glass of rum. "Do you want to know what you have done? I am going to tell you what you have done—to me! You have stolen my share of happiness!"

"Has that taken hold of you again?" said Phil. "I thought it was over—all this nonsense about stealing glory."

"It is n't glory, I tell you! It's happiness!"

Phil and Poufaille were speaking low, and no one heard them. Suzanne had sat down, and every one was accustomed to Poufaille's gestures. No one paid any attention.

"Good Poufaille, dear old Poufaille, I am sorry to

give you pain, old man," Phil said pleasantly, as he took away the bottle.

"No; it 's not worth while," Poufaille said sadly; "I shall drink no more. Only follow what I say,—do you follow? Do you know why I am not married?"

"No," said Phil, putting the bottle beyond reach.

"It is because *you* are not married."

"Indeed!" said Phil. "So, my good Poufaille, you wish to marry me off like that?"

"Yes; as you swore you would do!" answered Poufaille.

"To whom?"

"To Helia!"

"Speak lower!" Phil said, disquieted.

But even if they had talked louder, no one would have caught a word. Conversation was general around the board. The kissing was finished, and they were smoking cigarettes. The men talked horses, balancing, feats of strength; the ladies talked dress, spangled maillots, gauze skirts.

Phil and Poufaille, at their end of the table, were as free to converse as if they had been alone. Poufaille now bent over Phil, as if to tell him a secret.

"Yes; you swore it!" he continued. "And Suzanne concludes from it that the best of men are worth nothing at all—that men are windmills for lying. When I tell her I love her, that I 'll make her happy—when I swear to her that I cannot live without her, she turns on her heel, saying: 'That 's all humbug!' and that she can trust no one, not me more than you; that it costs nothing to get down on one's knees; that our promises

and oaths ought to be stuffed down our throats; and that the way you treated Helia was a shame—”

“Speak lower!” said Phil.

“—that you had promised her marriage,” Poufaille kept on; “that you loved her madly; that if need had been you would have taken God to witness; that you had sworn to her she should be your wife, and that you could not live without her. And, besides, it was no sudden stroke—you had known her for years, you had long loved her. And all at once, without any one knowing why, just because you earn a little money and have talent, while she is only a poor acrobat,—suddenly, without reason, you know her no longer; and if you should meet her in the street, you would turn your head. That ’s what Suzanne says; and she has more head than all of us—and more heart, too!”

Poufaille looked toward Suzanne with a sigh. Then he went on again: “Oh, Phil, I should never have told you all this; but, *ma foi*, it was choking me! I ’m not one of your Northern folks, to keep a secret. To me it ’s like a starched collar—I must pull it off! Now give me a glass of wine!”

Phil hesitated.

“Pour it out, I tell you,” Poufaille insisted. “I have a fever. It calms me; and, after all, there ’s truth in wine!”

Phil poured out a full glass, which Poufaille emptied.

“Ah, yes, yes!” he went on again, wandringly, as he put his glass down on the table; “when I think that without these stories she would have been my wife—and now she will not be, for when she says No, it means no!

She may be gay to look at, but she 's sad at heart. She has heaps of ideas that turn my blood. On my honor, I believe she will end in a convent! What! Phil, I laugh also; but I have no desire to laugh. It 's only by habit, you know; I feel more like weeping. And as to all those stories about glory which bothered me, how stupid one is to curdle one's blood for so little! But my happiness is gone forever; I shall never marry Suzanne, never, never!"

Poufaille's gestures emphasized his words; his fist came down heavily upon the table.

"Eh, over there! don't break anything," Suzanne cried. "Poufaille, you 're losing your head!"

"Yes, I 'm losing it—I mean no!" answered Poufaille. "I 'm only telling a story."

"That 's no reason for getting into a rage," Suzanne answered pleasantly.

"Yes, it is a reason," Poufaille murmured. "There is reason to get into a rage—and break things!"

"Calm yourself; be quiet," said Phil, who now regretted that he had come.

"Bah!" he thought; "is it worth my while listening to drunken maunderings?" But the hour for breaking up was near.

Phil stayed on, however, and Poufaille kept on talking.

"Ah!" he said, crossing his arms and looking Phil in the face; "after all, why did n't you marry her? Yes, why? You loved Helia, and no one can say anything against her. You agree with me about that, I suppose?"

Phil did not answer.

"Dear old Phil," Poufaille insisted strongly, "you can't deny it? We should n't be friends otherwise, you know."

"I alone must be judge of that," Phil said.

"No!" Poufaille said; "that 's your new way of looking at things; but I tell you, there 's not a woman in the world above her—do you understand?—not one! I tell you—not one!"

Phil frowned.

"I 'm not making any allusions," said Poufaille.

"I should hope not," said Phil.

"I am only telling you the truth," Poufaille declared; "and I am glad to have said it. I can breathe better now. It 's true! It turned my blood to hear Suzanne telling it, with Helia so sad. When I think that you used to be so rigid about such things—and now you act just like the others! What 's the difference between you and Socrate? For a man who is always quoting the Bible and setting himself up as an example—you 're a bad one, that 's all!"

Phil turned pale.

"Poufaille is drunk," he thought. "I 'd best go away."

But he stayed on; and Poufaille kept on talking; and Phil listened, in spite of himself, unmoved to all appearance, but deeply touched at bottom, for he could not say to Poufaille: "You are lying! It is false! I promised nothing!"

"Yes," Poufaille continued, in a low voice, making sure that no one was listening—"yes, I know what you

might say: Helia's surroundings, Socrate,—I know not what. You have suspected her, that I do know! Suzanne has told me. Our good Helia, who would give her life for you—if she only gives money to a beggar you suspect her for it; for Socrate is a beggar—a beggar she keeps alive out of pure charity, just as she helps Cemetery, simply because he is old and cannot work. But you know that as well as I."

"But the duke," Phil spoke up. "I saw Helia—"

"You saw Suzanne! Ah, I've blamed Suzanne often enough for it since—what an idea in her to go to take supper with the duke! I'd rather she would strike me with the broomstick!"

"And yet," Phil began.

"It's true the duke was greatly taken with her," Poufaille continued; "she had only a word to say and he would have offered her anything. She never accepted a thing—not even a flower!"

"Ah!" said Phil.

"You see," Poufaille went on, "you don't care much to meet Helia—you have your own reasons for it—for she is here, you know!"

Phil raised his head, as if he expected to see the canvas of the circus-tent open and Helia appear there looking at him. But there was no one save the artistes rising from the table and taking away the things. They were even removing the board, so as to leave the ring free. In the stables they were preparing the horses for rehearsal. He could hear the harness rattling, and the whips snapping. The ring, which had been so gay, suddenly became gloomy. Phil frankly regretted that

he had come. He had a single thought,—how to get away. Taking up his color-box and canvas, he said good day to every one, and shook Poufaille's hand.

"You 're going away?" Poufaille said. "You have n't a grudge against me, I hope—it was too much for me!"

"I have nothing against you, old Poufaille."

"Shall we see you again soon?"

"Who knows!" answered Phil; adding within himself: "Perhaps never!"

As he went out he cast a farewell look on the empty benches, on the white ladder and great globe, on the saddles and the maillots which were drying, and on the clowns' costumes. They were like old acquaintances whom he should see no more.

CHAPTER VI

WAS POUFAILLE RIGHT?

ONCE outside, Phil breathed easier. It seemed to him that the open air was driving away his nightmare, as the sun drives the darkness before it.

"Poufaille is either crazy or drunk," he said to himself, as he went through the fair with his paint-box in his hand. "Suzanne won't have him! I have nothing to do with it! Is that a reason to take tragically a childish love-making? And why should Suzanne interfere? Helia has never even breathed a word of it to me, and I've seen her often enough since. Surely, love must be muddling Poufaille's brain, if it is not the blows of the broomstick. He forgets that I am no longer the little boy to whom Suzanne was a great actress, Poufaille a great sculptor, Caracal a great psychologist, and Socrate a painter-poet-thinker-philosopher! There's been a change since then—and I alone am judge of it."

Phil acknowledged to himself that he had been a little troubled. Poufaille, with all his simplicity, was candid itself, and incapable of lying. Yes,—Phil repeated it over as if it gave him relief: Poufaille was drunk; the least beer-drinker would see ten wine-drinkers like

that under the table! He did Poufaille too much honor by listening to him; and Suzanne was a scatterbrain. Leave Suzanne her salad, and Poufaille his pig's-rump and garlic and wine! Leave every one to his own trade, and let them stop minding his affairs! Think of it! Now that he was a man, just when he had fallen in love with a young girl whom no one could approach, unless with a pure conscience—it was now that Poufaille would bring him down to the ground, reproaching him with having proved false to an oath,—with having been cowardly and mean, as if he had taken up with Helia to amuse himself with her and then cast her away! Poufaille, stupid and drunken, had said as much!

The absurdity of the idea, even more than the open air and gay sunlight, drove from his memory the sculptor's idle tales.

Phil hastened his steps, for he wished to finish the little picture which he had in his box. It was a nook of the landscape out beyond the last scattering houses of the town—a charming spot which they had discovered one day in the automobile. It was a place which had greatly pleased Miss Ethel.

She had said: "There are spots which you see for the first time, and yet they impress you like old friends. Would it not be delightful to have a little cottage here, and take care of one's own flowers. But no! one must have autos and horses—Longchamps and Epsom and Haymarket—ah! what fools these mortals be!"

The snorting forty-horse-power machine bore them afar while she was still building her little cottage.

"If I were a painter," she added, "that is what I

would paint. With the simplest subject you can make a masterpiece. This nook has pleased me, and I shall come back to it, be sure!"

Phil said nothing at the time; but he determined to paint the nook which had pleased Ethel so much, and to give the picture to her as a surprise before they left for Morgania.

Phil passed through the parts of the town which were between the open country and the fair. They were like the outskirts of other towns, with little boxes of houses and grimy wine-shops, and with great bare spaces where goats, the cows of the poor man, bleated despairingly. Just beyond was the full, open country. He approached the spot chosen by Miss Ethel. The noise of the town was no longer heard; before him were the gently rising hills crossed by flowering hedges and great leafy groves, in which the birds were playing.

Phil set up his easel in a shady spot, where Ethel had lingered. It was by a hedge above a slope leading down to a footpath. He opened his box, prepared his colors, and set to work. At times he leaned back to judge better the effect of the whole picture. At times he bent over to put in a touch; and as he painted, he let his mind wander as it would.

He could not help thinking of the morrow—of the *chasse à courre*, the mounted deer-hunt with dogs, with which the Comtesse de Donjeon was honoring the camping-party. It seemed to him that he was already there, taking in all its details. Even his costume occupied his mind—the Chantilly boots, the full white breeches, the double-breasted coat, the high felt hat—

the things which constitute the true huntsman's costume. It would become him well; and how charming she would be, with her blond hair under the three-cornered marquise hat!

Phil already fancied himself hearing the joyful notes of the hunting-horn, and watching the unrestrained galloping beneath the great trees,—a vision of the Middle Ages, with plumed knights and gentle ladies on their palfreys. Oh! there was one gentle lady who would follow the hunt with him,—and, lover as he was, Phil thought there would be monstrous daring in his wish to offer Miss Rowrer a nosegay of wild flowers,—for certainly she would see his trouble of soul, and he would betray himself as he offered it. Miss Rowrer could not be offended, of course! she had been too much courted in society not to allow a little of it in the country. It was the business of bores in society life; but supposing she saw what he meant, would she deign to encourage him?

All this preoccupied Phil, as he put the finishing touches to his landscape. The place inclined to reverie. While he was there, scarcely two or three persons had passed along the road below. They could not see him; it would be necessary to climb up the slope and break through the hawthorn hedge. For two hours Phil had been working. He had reached the time, so dangerous for the artist, when a few strokes too much spoil the picture. He resolved to leave it as it was, without any working up, in all its freshness of first inspiration. He was preparing to close his box and fold his easel before going back to Camp Rosemont; but two persons ap-



Phil Watching Helia and Socrate



peared in the lane below. He gave them no more attention than he had given to others. It seemed to him that a man was speaking, and a woman replying. He did not see them; but when they came near him he recognized their voices.

He stopped motionless and listened again, thinking he must have been mistaken. He leaned over and looked through the branches of the hedge. It was indeed they—Helia and Socrate.

Phil felt a chill at his heart. He would like to have had Poufaille there for a moment—only for a moment—yet no! he would be the only witness! He would see falling away before him, dropping to the dust, petal by petal, the flower of his childish love. He was going to hear Helia talking sweetly, arm in arm, with the painter-thinker. His little Saint John of other days, so pure and simple, he would hear her; but, ah, how he wished that he was not there, that he could not hear!

But he heard everything. Bits of conversation mounted up to him as if torn asunder by the thorns of the hedge.

“Listen to me!” Socrate was saying.

“I know what you are going to say,” answered Helia. “Begone!—I have told you—no!”

“Yet you were so good to me,” continued the tearful voice of Socrate, using the familiar “thou.”

“Socrate, I tell you once again, you are to say ‘you’ when you speak to me,” Helia interrupted firmly. “Any one listening to you might think you had rights over me!”

"But no one is listening!"

"I hear you!"

There was a moment of silence. They had stopped and Phil looked at them. He was astounded by the change in Socrate. His beard was unkempt, and he lowered his head with an air at once humble and aggressive. He spoke to Helia with looks which he tried to render touching. On his ragged garments were bits of straw, as if he had slept in a stack. It was clear that Socrate had been wandering around the neighborhood for several days, waiting for Helia. He must have met her by chance and, yielding to his entreaties, she had followed him to have, alone with him, a final explanation.

Helia was pale, tired from her journey, as Poufaille had said. Her black eyes shone feverishly. In her modest black gown she seemed to Phil more beautiful than ever, and more refined. She scarcely turned her head toward Socrate; and her glance at him was that of scornful pity.

"You who were so good to me," the tearful voice went on.

"Too good, it is true!" answered Helia. "I saw your wretchedness,—that you were starving,—and I believed in your genius. I would have been proud to help a poet,—to have had something to do, no matter how little, with the production of a masterpiece. I sinned by pride; I thought I could lift myself in the eyes of others—especially in *his* eyes," she added slowly. "I thought I was acting for the best; I was wrong!"

"Why were you wrong?"

"It is wrong to aid one who does nothing!"

"Ah!" replied the man, with his look of a beaten dog, "it is not my fault if I have not fulfilled my dream. Society is pitiless to thinkers! Those who march to a lofty goal are disdained by the common herd!"

Socrate, as he spoke, clenched his fist. Phil could see his fingers working spasmodically—ah! if he could only strangle the whole world! Helia did not let her eyes fall so low. She fixed them on the face of Socrate, scorning his impotent gestures.

"Silence! You are only grotesque!"

"Be it so, I have made a mistake," the voice went on. "But I can make amends for my wrong-doing. Ah! if you only were willing—if you were willing, I could make you happy. I would occupy myself with your affairs; you should be rid of every care. You would have a sure friend, and I, too,—I would become an artiste!"

"You—an artiste!"

She drew herself up to her full height and looked at the great empty forehead, at the chicken-necked and round-shouldered Socrate, at his sallow skin, his moral hideousness, this rag of a painter and poet and thinker and philosopher.

"An artiste—you! Why, you would not be capable even to show a shaved bear, or a sick dog, or a two-headed calf! Oh, I know you! You 'd like to be a professor and train Scurette with strokes of the whip, if you were allowed! And you 'd always be there at my side, to steer me through life like a devoted friend,

would you? Just as you used to do before. And when I think that people may have said as much, and perhaps believed that I was your—friend,—and when I remember that you advised me to frequent the company of a rich duke and forget the friend of my childhood,—when I think of all that, it is enough to make me die of shame!”

Socrate gnashed his teeth.

“So it ’s the friend of your childhood, is it?—always he?”

“Always he!” said Helia, simply.

“Yet you know—I have told you—that he loves another.”

“I know it.”

“And that he no longer cares for you.”

“I shall believe it when he tells me so himself,” was Helia’s answer.

Socrate put his hands to his head, as if to say: “Can one be such a fool!”

“But, really,” he said aloud, “since you love him so much, why do you not use the weapons you have to bring him back to you?”

“Weapons!”

“His letters!”

“You are a miserable fellow! See—here are his letters!” And Helia took from her breast a few yellowed envelops. “They might, indeed, fall into the hands of a wretch like you.” And opening them, she tore the pages in small pieces.

“But there ’s a fortune in them for you!” gasped Socrate. “You don’t know what you are doing!”

"There 's what I care for such a fortune!" said Helia; and she opened wide her hand. It might have been a flight of white butterflies. The light breeze scattered the fragments on every side. Some seemed to hesitate, as if issuing from a warm nest, and then mounted upward, whirling around in space. Others fell on the hedge. All these poor little things which had been promises of love, and held in themselves an entire youth, were scattered at once by a breath from heaven.

"Yet I loved them well," she said. "Only it is better so."

Then, speaking to Socrate, she added proudly: "I will not have him love me for fear,—I wish him to love me for love's sake!"

Blushing for shame, she turned her back to Socrate, and walked away without a look behind. The man began following her. She turned back a last time, stopped him with an imperious gesture, and disappeared in the lane.

Socrate, in his fury, growled like a wolf. Phil saw him turn his head rapidly, to make sure there was no one near, and then put his hand quickly to his pocket, as if to take out a knife. But no doubt what he sought was not there; and his hand came forth empty—luckily for Socrate, since Phil would have leaped the hedge with a bound and fallen on him like a thunder-bolt. Then Socrate disappeared among the trees with a furtive look.

Phil remained alone. He put everything in order, folding his things together, and went away. He felt

a sort of embarrassment—a shame that made him hurry his footsteps as if to flee from himself.

Was Poufaille right? Phil passed his hand across his forehead. A thousand things came back to him now; a bright light was thrown on the abyss where his youth had perished. The flight of the white butterflies had been a seed of remembrance to him—the remembrance of the love of his boyhood. Had it been the romantic passion of an ignorant heart? No; there had been broken promises and contempt of oaths!

Well, even in such a case, drunken Poufaille had exaggerated; Helia was more reasonable. She must understand that it was impossible. She could not deceive herself to such a degree, nor keep on pursuing imaginations never to be realized. Her own words, “I shall believe it when he tells me so himself,” were a confession. She would submit to the inevitable. How was she going to take the final rupture? Phil, in his heart, trembled to think of it, but it had to be! He would tell her everything; he would take back the word he had given. He would speak to her, lowering his eyes, hunting for his words; low, as when one begs for forgiveness. Never mind, he would tell her! He would act as with a somnambulist, commanding: “Awake! it was a dream!”

Yes; Helia would understand, without need of insisting. They would part with a loyal shake of the hand, like the good friends they were, and would follow separate destinies.

Phil walked on, without looking behind, like one escaping. He felt easier in his mind. No, there was not

such a tragedy in it all as Poufaille had led him to foresee. Things would go on simply, Phil mused within himself. For him it was the time of slanting sophisms which issue from the folds of the heart like crabs from under a rock. He was more sincere and manly when he put aside with a gesture all his anguish and uncertainty and, setting his jaw, lifted his head as he said to himself: "It is too late! Fate has willed it; all society would be on my side; they would say I was right. Even if Helia's tears should flow, even if I should see in her eyes a mute malediction for the slayer of her illusions, I could do no otherwise; it is too late!"

Phil breathed deeply, as if his breast had been lightened of a heavy load. He looked around him with the air of a man to whom the future belongs.

Lowering his eyes, he saw upon his shoulder one of the poor little fragments of torn letters. Phil threw it from him with a snap of his finger.

CHAPTER VII

“A TRUE HEART LOVES BUT ONCE”

THE day for which Phil had waited so impatiently was come at last—the day of the *chasse à courre*. Ethel left the hunt and came back alone to the glade where grandma, a little tired and seated in the great break, was waiting for the return of the hunters. She got down from her horse and tossed the reins to a valet. The sun lighted up the tops of the lofty trees, leaving all the rest in the shade. From afar they heard the voices of the hounds. The hunting-horn filled the forest with a far-away melody.

“Poor little doe!” said Ethel, “it is nearly an hour since she left the thicket, followed by the hounds. She must be by this time in the pretty valley I christened the other day the Forest of Arden—you remember?—when I was reading there Shakspeare’s ‘As You Like It.’ They must have lost the scent—her mate is leading the dogs away from her, no doubt. But it is not for that I have come back, grandma. I wish to speak with you.”

“Why don’t you follow the hunt?” grandma asked. “Has anything happened to you, Ethel?”

“Nothing at all, grandma. My horse was in splendid

form, and I, too; but, while taking a ditch, she lost a shoe. She 's limping a little, I think. And then—and then I could n't see you alone yesterday at the château, and I have something to say to you. But let us not stay here; they might overhear us," Ethel added, glancing at the lackeys, who were loading into a van the champagne-baskets and other remains of the picnic.

"I will get down," said grandma. Leaning on Ethel's arm, she got out of the break and they crossed the open space.

"Let us go over there," Ethel said, pointing to one of those graceful edifices called *nymphéés*, which are the necessary ornament of every self-respecting park. It consisted of a bench, green with the mold of time and surrounded by a colonnade covered with moss and ivy. It gave this corner of the forest a mythological note. It was like one of those rustic shrines where, in the shadow of the sacred grove, goddesses were appeased by the offering of victims.

"Who would not say this is a scene of Shakspeare's fancy?" said Ethel. "Listen to the hunting-horn—you might believe you were in an enchanted forest. But," she added, as grandma sat down, "there is no question now of Will the Great, but only of our own dear Will, and of Mlle. Yvonne."

"She 's very nice," said grandma. "She 'll profit a great deal by your company, between Will and you. From being a doll, Yvonne will soon become a woman."

"Mlle. Yvonne is already a woman—a true one," Ethel went on, gravely. "She has an upright mind and a strong and resolute heart; and I love her."

"She 's going to marry Will?" grandma exclaimed, starting up. "That dear little Yvonne?"

"No, grandma, Yvonne will never be Will's wife. She has refused."

"What did I say?" grandma replied. "She 's a doll—she does n't know what she wants! Does a young girl let herself be buried alive like that? Why should n't she show herself as she is and say: 'I will!' when her happiness is at stake? She has much in common with Will, I am sure. But in this country no one dares to say what she thinks; people don't look each other squarely in the face. If you wish, Ethel, we 'll leave for America to-morrow!"

"Wait a bit, grandma, and then you 'll love Yvonne with all your heart."

"After what she has done? Never!"

"Because of what she has done? Sit down again, grandma, and I will tell you everything."

"You will waste your breath, Ethel."

"Wait," Ethel continued. "Will was very much taken with Yvonne—I am sure that now he would be much more so if he were only allowed. The fact that he has been refused shows him so much better the woman he is losing. It has been a revelation to us. He was conquered by Yvonne as Desdemona by Othello. In a way he pitied the young girl's lot—it was so childish; there was so little society for her. One ball a year,—a poor little ball, next to nothing,—a life passed in the dim light of curtains half drawn, near a deserted street, the strong contrast with Will's stormy life in Chicago."

"That is real life!" said grandma.

"Well," Ethel continued, "everything took hold of Will, just as a man deafened with the noise of machinery loves the murmur of bees."

"Oh, it is France Will 's in love with," grandma said. "It was his auto journey from Paris and our excursions round the camp that he was going to marry—it 's only a fancy already passed."

"No; it will never pass!" answered Ethel. "It is true all his impressions were personified in Yvonne; but she shows such sterling qualities that she has no need to personify anything to be loved."

"You must tell me everything, Ethel," said grandma.

"This is the way it happened. Of course, it was impossible for Will to speak alone with Yvonne, especially on such subjects. Besides, he never had the opportunity; and then—it is n't done! In France, when a young man sees a young girl that pleases him, he asks her parents for her; and her parents accept or refuse."

"How dreadful!" said grandma.

"Will," Ethel kept on, "was speaking about it one day to Mme. Riçois."

"Mme. Riçois? What has she got to do with it?"

"Why, everything, grandma; everything! If it had not been for Mme. Riçois we should have gone off to Morgania without anything being decided. Will passed his young days between our mines in Montana and the Chicago Stock Exchange, and never had time to be in love. Mme. Riçois opened his eyes. I ought

to tell you that she is the most inveterate marrier of the town."

"A marrier? I thought she was a banker's wife!"

"Oh, she has to do something," replied Ethel. "Mme. Riçois makes matches to please herself. The little woman delights in it. I can imagine her embroidering on her sleeve, like an officer's stripes, the number of marriages she has brought about."

"How dreadful!" said grandma.

"She and Will are great friends. Would you believe it, grandma?—last month she said to him point-blank: 'Mr. Rowrer, I must find a match for you!' Will only laughed. 'Now, don't say No!' Mme. Riçois added mysteriously; 'I have a great scheme in my head.' 'What is your scheme?' Will asked, more and more amused. 'But you must n't tell anybody! I wish to bring about a Franco-American alliance!' Will did n't answer, but I saw he understood, for I was present."

"And what then?" asked grandma.

"Naturally they began talking about marriage. Mme. Riçois told us how she takes hold of the matter; the measures she takes for the parents: 'I've found a young man who is quite in your line; this is his situation.' Thereupon a family council is held, and the young girl is consulted as a matter of form. Oh, there's a whole minute and complicated diplomacy."

"And yet it would be so simple for the young folks to explain matters to each other!" grandma exclaimed.

"That is what Will answered; but Mme. Riçois objected that this is never done. I thought as much, but I know France. It was quite new to Will; and he kept

repeating: 'Is it possible? Is it possible? For my part, I'd like to be better acquainted with the girl I marry! I shall certainly never get married in France.' Then Mme. Riçois spoke up: 'The main thing is that you should please the parents.' 'But it's the young girl I want to please, and to know if I am pleasing her,' Will said obstinately. 'M. Rowrer,' Mme. Riçois said, 'I have made twenty marriages and they're all happy; and I myself married my husband without being acquainted with him. That was thirty years ago, and our honeymoon is not over yet!' 'Perhaps she is right,' Will said when Mme. Riçois was gone. 'Marriages seem to me as happy here as anywhere. Different countries have different manners, but at bottom they're all the same.' I'm persuaded, grandma, that from that day the Franco-American alliance began. I mean that the remembrance of Mlle. Yvonne was crystallized in his heart."

While Ethel was speaking the shadows had grown darker beneath the trees. A purple haze softened the outlines of the glade. There was deep silence, with now and then an echo of the hunting-horns, light as the humming of a fly. Again the hunt found its way, and the doe, abandoned by her cowardly mate, turned back toward her haunts. Soon the hallali would push her to the thicket from which she had started, and where, at the end of her strength, she would take shelter to die.

"Listen," Ethel said to grandma, "Will, Phil, and every one are out there, forgetful of care and trouble, chasing to its death a poor, innocent animal. Isn't it

sad?" Then, taking up her interrupted conversation, she continued: "From that day, especially, Will thought of Mlle. Yvonne. He saw her again several times and fell more and more under her charm, in spite of their commonplace interviews. Each time he discovered new qualities in her. When I praised her, Will was glad to listen; and Mme. Riçois was always after him with the scheme of the alliance. You can imagine that it did n't please Will much to be obliged to win the parents in order to get the girl. Well! he won over everybody. As to grand'mère, who is the Egeria of the family, the one that decides difficult cases without appeal from her judgment—"

"Grand'mère said no for Yvonne?" grandma asked.

"Grand'mère said yes!"

"But if mother and grandmother, uncles and aunts, and Mme. Riçois say yes, who is it says no?"

"Yvonne says no."

"Well, I declare!" grandma exclaimed, in amazement. It was not the first time she had declared since she was in France, but never with such energy. In her voice there were astonishment and anger and admiration and, most of all, curiosity.

"How did it happen, Ethel? Tell me all!" and she turned her face toward her granddaughter with an expression of anxiety.

"Ah!" Ethel replied, "who would ever suspect that Yvonne had a romance in her life?"

"A romance in Yvonne's life! What are you telling me, Ethel? Watched as she is, a romance! It must have been with another doll!—when she was ten years

old—or when she was playing husband and wife with some child of her own age!"

"Exactly so," Ethel answered, with a serious look. "Listen! Yesterday I went in the auto to the Grojeans', to say good day as I passed. I suspected nothing. Everything was shut up, as usual. I knocked and was let in. The door of the salon opened, and Yvonne, who had recognized my voice, came toward me with outstretched hands, and said: 'Oh, it's you!' How glad I am! Come in!'"

Grandma was immensely interested, and listened, with her eyes fixed on those of Ethel, with a scarcely perceptible movement of her lips, as if, in her anxiety to lose nothing, she were repeating the words to herself.

"By the way in which Yvonne took my hand," Ethel went on, in a low voice, "I understood something was happening. The Grojean ladies were there, silent and much embarrassed, and there was Mme. Riçois, as red as possible. I looked at Yvonne. 'My dear friend,' Yvonne said to me, 'I am glad you came. Perhaps you know what is going on. For me it's my first news of it. They have just told me of a great scheme,—an offer so honorable and so flattering—' That moment, grandma, I understood they had just communicated to Yvonne Will's intentions. By the way in which the ladies listened to Yvonne, I also learned that she had not yet given her answer. She was going to speak in my presence.

"The offer is so flattering," Yvonne said, looking me squarely in the face, 'and I should have been so very happy to call you my sister; the marriage would overwhelm every one here with joy' (I had only to look at

the beaming faces to see that they expected Yvonne to say 'I accept')—'the marriage would overwhelm us all with joy; but there is some one—one only—who would have too great pain from it. I am not free—I have given my word to another!'

"I wish you had been there, grandma, to judge of the consternation caused by the word 'another'! Mme. de Grojean arose, pale as death.

"'Yvonne, you have given your word to another? Without your mother knowing it? To whom? Answer!'

"'To my cousin Henri,' answered Yvonne.

"Mme. de Grojean breathed again: 'To your cousin Henri! But he is only a child-sweetheart, my dear daughter; every one has that in her life. Now you must act like a woman. That was not in earnest. Henri will give you back your word!'

"'But I shall not take it back!' said Yvonne.

"'What are you thinking of! Your cousin Henri—nothing but an employee at the Rigois bank, with no substantial situation and with no future; do you compare him with Monsieur Rowrer, for whom, besides, you have a sentiment? Avow it!—it is nothing to blush for.'

"'I do not blush for it,' Yvonne said; 'but I have a sentiment for Henri also; and, moreover, he has my word. If he is not rich, he will work. Monsieur Rowrer is too rich! What an opinion Henri would have of me if he thought I would marry another just because he is worth millions, and would abandon him because he is poor! Surely he would believe so! I would never dare look him in the face. Henri counts on me,—I shall be his wife!'

"Oh, brave little Yvonne!" said grandma. "Did she say that?"

"Yes, grandma, she said that; and she was radiant with beauty as she said it, I can assure you. 'My dear Ethel,' she told me afterward, 'you see there is nothing to wound Monsieur Rowrer's self-love. Tell him I have the greatest esteem for him, and would have been so glad to call you my sister, Ethel. But what would you have done in my place?'"

"Yvonne must have seen in my looks how deeply I was moved, and how much I admired her."

"What about the family council—what did it say?" grandma asked.

"'Is that your final decision?' Mme. de Grojean demanded of Yvonne.

"'It is my final decision,' said Yvonne.

"'Come, then, Yvonne, and be happy!' and the mother pressed her to her bosom."

"But the grandmother—that terrible grand'mère?"

"Grand'mère kissed Yvonne on the forehead, and said to her, 'You 've done well, my child,'—and then I came away. That is all, grandma."

The evening was creeping over the forest. The high clumps of trees stood out in somber masses against the deep sky. Ethel and grandma had completely forgotten the hunt; but the sound of the horns drew near. The exhausted doe was returning, followed close by the hounds.

"Let us go away; the dew is falling," grandma said pensively. "Let us go back to the breaks; the hunters will soon be here."

"Go on alone, grandma; I will wait for them here. I shall return to the château on horseback."

Ethel remained on the stone bench. When she separated herself from the hunt the branch of a tree in a narrow alley had ruffled her hair. She took off her hat, to put it in order. She was just finishing, when a hunter, who had doubtless left his horse at the rendezvous and seemed to be looking for some one, crossed the glade and passed before her.

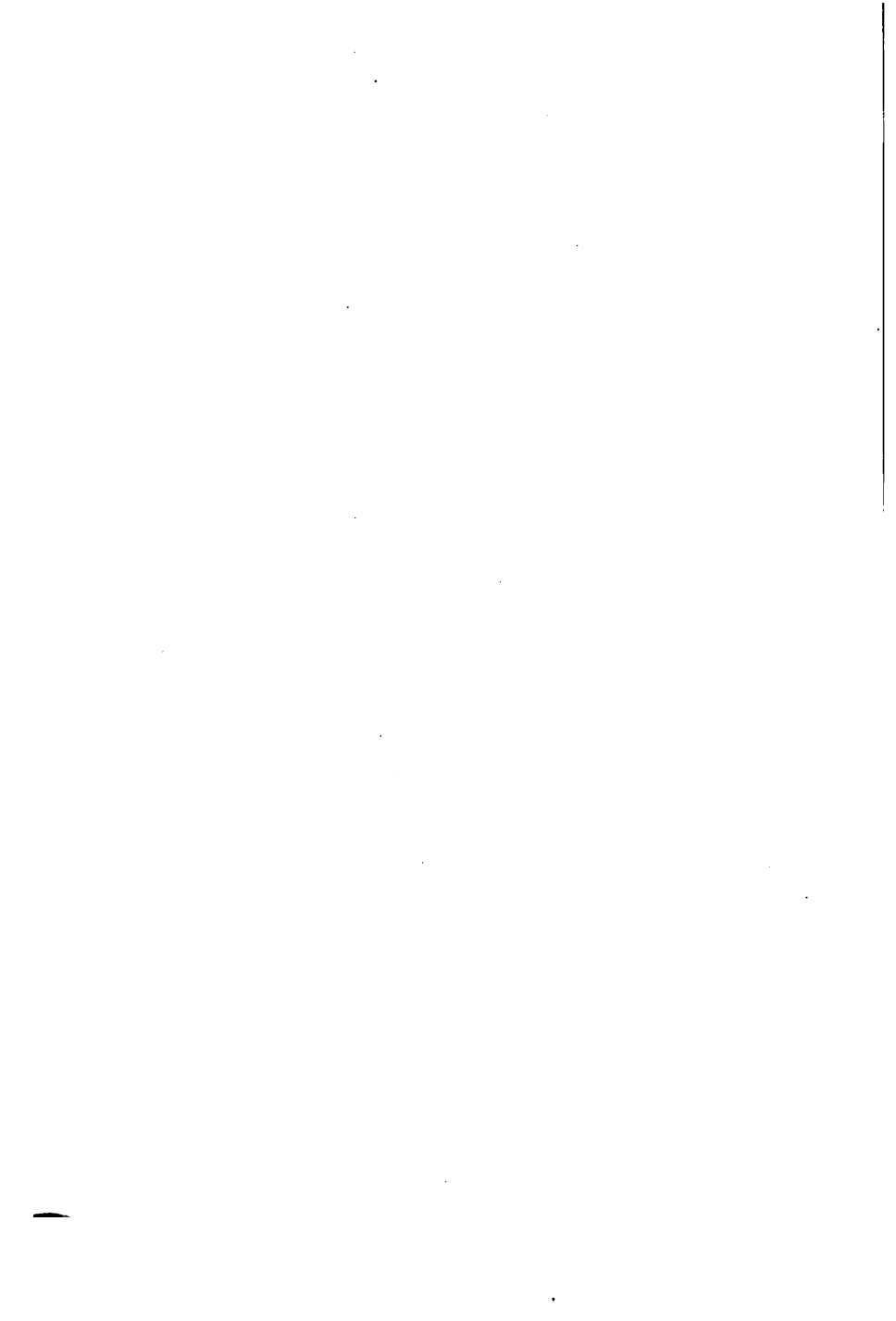
"Monsieur Phil!" Ethel said, rising.

Phil turned his head toward her. Ethel stood upright in the ruined colonnade. Her blond hair shone bright against the dark background of ivy-covered rock. With her black gown, she might have been a nymph in mourning, staying some passing wanderer, in the depths of a sacred grove.

Phil was dazzled. He knew he should find her at this place, for he had seen her leave the hunt near the spot of the hallali. He wished to see Ethel. He had gathered in haste a nosegay of wild flowers to offer her. Miss Rowrer was to see that he had come back for her,—that he had gathered the flowers for her, that he was thinking of her. She might, too, see his emotion when he should offer his simple gift. She would thank him. He would say he knew not what,—but she would know! He had sworn to himself to act; the time had come. Nature herself pushed him forward. There was gladness in this beautiful evening. The wind stirred the lofty trees and Phil listened to the hunting-horn as the soldier sharpens his courage by the rolling of the drums. He



"Ethel stood upright in the ruined colonnade"



advanced respectfully toward Ethel, hiding the flowers with which he wished to surprise her.

"You have something on your mind, Monsieur Phil," Ethel said.

"Is it as plain as that?" Phil asked, in an uncertain voice.

Like a true lover, he thought he could already read in her face the feelings which moved himself. He was almost sorry to have come. He would have been glad to escape, and he tried to hide his trouble by indifferent remarks.

"You, Miss Rowrer, are radiant this evening."

"It is because I am so happy, Monsieur Phil. Oh, so happy!"

"The evening is so fine," Phil began; "you—"

"I saw yesterday something finer and sweeter than all that," Ethel interrupted, with a gesture which took in the forest and the sumptuous sky. "I saw some one yesterday repulse with disdain a fortune, to remain faithful to a childhood love."

Phil stopped short.

"It was a young girl," Ethel went on, slowly, as if to communicate to him her own conviction,—“a young girl who believes in the sanctity of promises made when one is young, when the heart is as clear as the sky,—a young girl who believes in loyalty to her word once given, and to oaths exchanged later, when she knew what she was doing—at the age when one still sees in love only love itself.”

"It might be for me and Helia!" Phil thought. "Yet, she knows nothing about it."

"That is why I look radiant," Ethel continued. "Ah, it refreshes me after what we see so often,—vile hearts and cowardly consciences."

"This is my punishment," thought Phil.

In full daylight, Ethel would certainly have noticed his fearful pallor. He stammered out: "One is not always master of his own heart!"

"A true heart," replied Ethel, "loves but once. There are not different oaths for each different age of life."

All this was a lightning-flash to Phil's soul. Ethel had never seemed more friendly to him, and she was radiant and gay. But he no longer thought of her. He was face to face with himself.

"Yet, in spite of one's self," Phil answered, in a hesitating voice, "the sacrifice of first love may be made to a later one—it sometimes happens."

"It happens every day," said Ethel; "money talks!"

Phil let his nosegay of wild-flowers fall behind him to the ground.

"I won't keep you, Monsieur Phil," she said, believing that she was preventing him from taking part in the hallali. "Go, now!" she continued pleasantly, "they 're only waiting for you to cut the doe's throat—listen, they 're sounding the death!"

Indeed, the forest near them was full of a rising tumult; lackeys were carrying torches; cries and calls were heard, and the barking of the hounds grew savage. The poor doe had come back to her sleeping-place to die. There was despair in her gasp; and the flaring horns set up the triumphal song of the hallali.

"Really, Phil, I do not wish to deprive you of such pleasure. Go. But you had something in your hand just now—some flowers, I think. Put them on this bench. You will find them when you return."

"I have nothing, Miss Ethel," Phil answered, showing his empty hands.

Every word Ethel had said wounded him cruelly, though he felt sure she knew nothing of his relations with Helia. It seemed to him they applied to his own troubles. They thrilled him to the bottom of his heart.

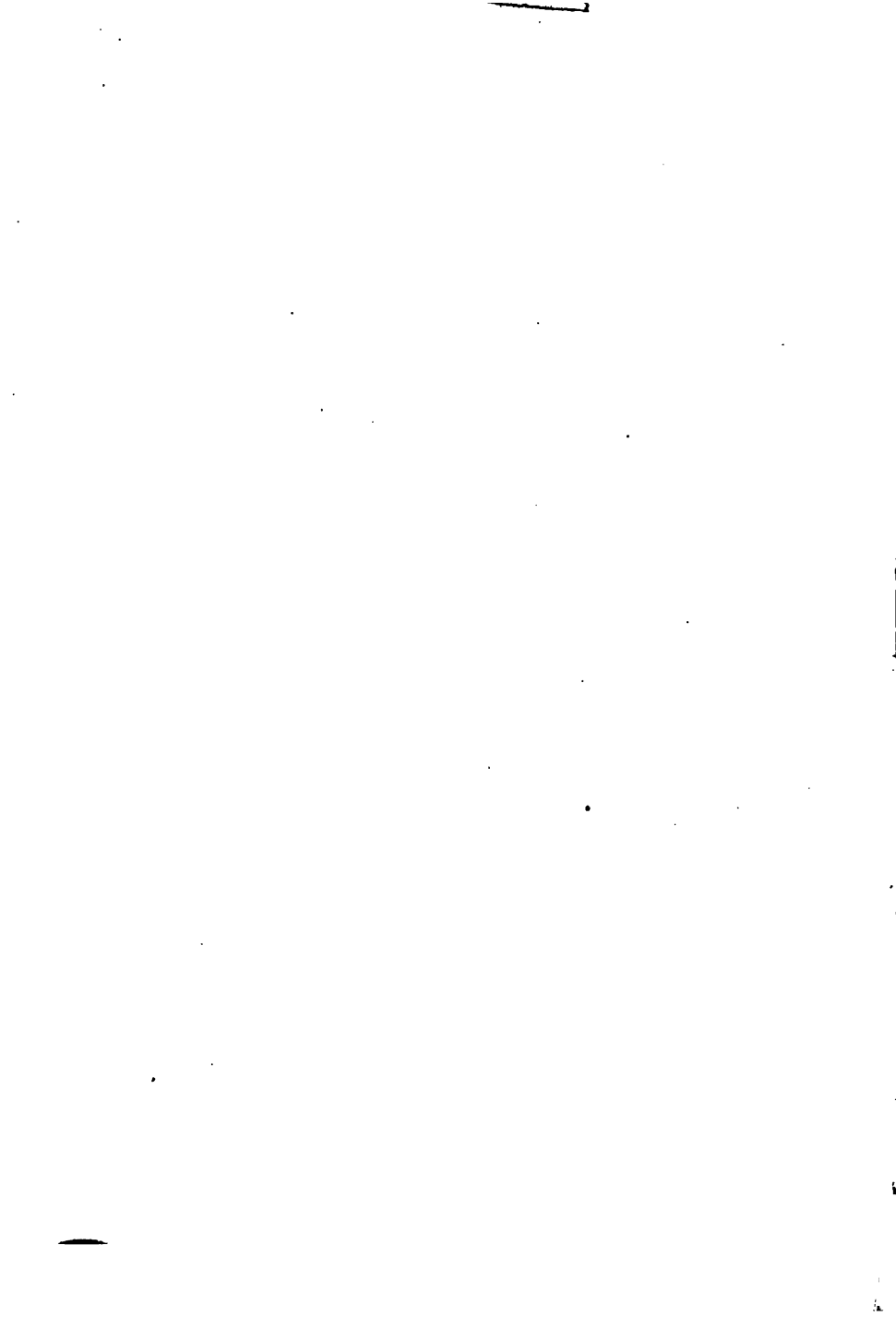
He plunged into the night of the forest, toward the blood-red glow lighting up the slaughter.



PART IV
CONSCIENCE



PART IV
CONSCIENCE



CHAPTER I

ON THE BLUE SEA.

A BLUE sea—a blue sky. The yacht was sailing under deep azure, reflected back by calm waters. It was unlike the jolts and staccato teuf-teuf of the automobile; it was gentle as the swinging of a balloon in the open heavens. The furrow of foam behind the yacht was like a trail of clouds.

On the promenade-deck, in the shade of the big deck-house, grandma, Ethel, and Will were taking the air, stretched out in bamboo chairs. Through the open door books and newspapers could be seen on the table, and in the corners of the salon baskets of beautiful flowers were disposed. The sea breeze mingled with the smell of roses. Near the yacht's prow a band was playing softly. Among the crew there were musicians by trade, —old sailors of the navy bands. They were training themselves for gala-days later on—in Sicily, in Greece, in Morgania. Their low notes reached the group at the stern like a murmur of distant voices. Ethel looked abstractedly across the sea to the horizon. She was thinking of the country she had left behind—of the mists and gardens where the leaves fall in autumn; of the countries she was yet to see, with their blue ar-

chipelagos, whose white minarets seem milky pearls set in sapphire.

She was almost overwhelmed with remembrances. She thought of those shores where poets sang of gods and heroes; of that sea which had reflected, in turn, fable and faith, where the galley of St. Paul crossed the meandering track of Ulysses's bark. She found exquisite delight in this legendary past. She fancied to herself Cleopatra and Dido and Morgana, queens who were all but goddesses, and the Roman matrons, borne across the waves to the sound of lutes, with their jesters and their scribes. At her side, Will and grandma were chatting quietly.

"You are a good boy," grandma said. "I am glad you got my telegram in time to put an elevator in the yacht;—perhaps the reason I like new things is because I am growing old."

"Not at all, grandma," interrupted Ethel. "What is stupider than to go climbing up-stairs? It is the least esthetic of all movements."

"That was my idea!" said grandma. .

"And the wireless telegraph was mine," said Will.

Will had himself supervised the building of his yacht, to make it a model of its type. He deserved a Nobel prize for the practical way in which he had foreseen everything. But its nautical qualities, and the rigidity of its double steel shell were as nothing in comparison with its interior comfort.

The yacht could have held two hundred passengers, and it accommodated only ten. Its furnishings and arrangements were sumptuous. The deck-house was a

hundred feet long. In front were a card-room and the apartments of the captain; all the rest was taken for great cabins, each with its boudoir and bath-room.

Through the music-room, where the breath of the open sea brought to grandma, Ethel, and Will the smell of the roses, they would go down to the great hall wainscoted in unvarnished cedar, which framed decorative panels. Farther on in the suite of rooms was the library, with its wide, red-leather sofas. Above the shelves twelve caryatids, in yellow marble, upheld the plinth. There were radiators for heat and ventilators for coolness, with telephones and electric buttons everywhere. Their bells gave a thrill of life from end to end of the yacht.

Ethel was on the point of ringing for her maid, when Suzanne appeared. She brought the plaids, fearing the evening freshness might incommode Mme. Rowrer or Miss Rowrer.

"Suzanne," Ethel said, while she was putting a plaid over her shoulders, "I don't see Monsieur Phil. Perhaps he is showing the yacht to Mademoiselle Helia."

"No; Monsieur Phil is not showing the yacht. Monsieur Phil is giving a lemon to M. Caracal to suck. M. Caracal suffers martyrdom. The sighs of M. Caracal rend one's heart. Mademoiselle Helia is in her cabin, reading."

Suzanne, since she had become a soubrette, said "Mademoiselle" when she spoke of Helia. She had perfect tact; she was the ideal soubrette. She had accepted eagerly Ethel's offer to accompany her to Morgania. The life she was leading with Perbaccho wearied her;

and then, to hear Poufaille always repeating the same thing over,—to be always knocking on the same skull at the same hours,—she was tired of it all.

Will at first intended to take Poufaille along to help the cook, but he prudently gave up the project when he heard Poufaille explaining his ideas on pig's-rump and garlic, and goat's-milk cheese. So Suzanne not only escaped from Poufaille for the present, but she served Miss Rowrer, whom she adored; and, moreover, she followed Helia and Phil. She guessed that something had lately passed between them. She was devoured by curiosity to know how the romance would end. Was it possible that Phil, who formerly had been so good and upright, could have changed to such a degree? A hundred times over she had been called to be a witness to his love and a confidante of his oaths. Ah, men, men! for them the broomstick—*et aïe donc!*

"Tell me," Ethel said, "is Mademoiselle Helia glad, now that she has come? I had Monsieur Phil invite her, and she refused at first. I had to insist myself, and almost get angry, to make her accept."

"Oh, yes, Mademoiselle Helia is very glad!" and Suzanne, having arranged the plaids, lifted to Miss Rowrer eyes in which she might have read infinite gratitude for so much goodness.

"I need you, Helia," Ethel had urged; "you know it well! I count on you for my lessons in physical culture, and you know I've got it in my head to take you to my father's university. There are charming young girls there, and you will teach them how to be strong and beautiful. Besides, the voyage will do so much good to Sœurette. Come—you'll be at home!"

Helia had accepted. To travel with Phil would be to lengthen her torture; but, at least, she would see him.

At first, amid all these marble statues and bronze reliefs, Helia felt herself intimidated, habituated as she was to the coarsely painted scene-canvases and papier-mâché bronzes. But Ethel treated her as an equal—Ethel, who had the art to be respected without being unapproachable.

“Ask them to come up,” Ethel said to Suzanne. “It ’s the finest hour of the day.”

The sea was mild. Great clouds were climbing above the horizon, while an enormous sun was slowly setting in splendor of molten gold.

“The duke was right,” Ethel said to Will. “From the point of view of Paris the legend of Morgana might seem ridiculous, but here, in the grandeur of such scene-setting, even the supernatural seems normal. How far away are the ant-hills of Paris and London! Only think how somewhere people are agitating themselves in fog and smoke, while we are sailing straight for dreamland and—is n’t it curious?—a duchy with sorceresses and fairies in its history, where legends a thousand years old still move the people. I wish to believe in it—I wish to see the return of Morgana!”

“Keep thy flight to the West, bold sailor;
The land thou seekest shall arise,
Even though it existed not,
From the depths of the waves to welcome thee.”

It was Phil, who arrived ahead of Caracal. He had heard Ethel, and capped her thought with verses from Schiller.

"How is your patient, Monsieur Phil?" asked Ethel; "how is M. Caracal? Seasickness is a sad affair; even animals suffer from it—the ox, the ass, the hog, the monkey—"

"And especially man," said Caracal, following Phil.

Caracal thanked Miss Rowrer. He was better. The responsibility of the old French politeness weighed on Caracal. He went through his most graceful manners, lifting his little finger in the air, and smiling and scraping his foot. And then—*crac!* a diving bow, with his lip turned up, to kiss one's hand—or to bite it.

He wore a faultless suit, and an artistic cravat, which the wind swelled out like a banner. He redoubled his politeness to grandma, a sure means, in his mind, to win her granddaughter. He hummed to himself a music-hall refrain:

" Pour avoir la fille
Aimable et gentille,
C'est à la maman
Qu'il faut d'abord faire des compliments ! "

(" To gain the daughter,
Sweet and pretty,
To the old mother
Sing your ditty ! ")

He rhymed sonnets to Miss Rowrer, and trotted out his erudition, working up his Baedeker in his cabin, and astonishing every one by his qualifications as a cicerone.

"M. Caracal would make an ideal courier," thought grandma.

Caracal, out of the tail of his eye, glanced at the books on the salon table. "The House of Glass," which

had just appeared before their departure, lay, uncut, under a pile of magazines. Caracal was a little annoyed; but, with an author's pride, he hesitated to call Miss Rowrer's attention again to his own novel.

"A wireless for Miss Rowrer." The captain's boy approached, with his cap off and a paper in his hand.

"Where does it come from?" Ethel asked.

"From a ship off there."

Ethel instinctively lifted her eyes to the mast, which seemed to be throwing out its feelers into space. Then she opened the paper and read:

Captain *Far East* en route New York wishes good journey to Captain *Columbia*. R. K. Rowrer's orders to put himself at disposition of yacht. Bad news from Morgania—land excursions dangerous. Any message for New York.

Ethel arose. One point appeared on the horizon and then another.

"It 's the *Far East* and the *Far West*," said Will. "They 've been carrying bridge iron to Africa for the Cape-to-Cairo railway, and machinery for the Nyanza ferry-boat company. They belong to pa."

"Really!" said Ethel, looking at the two ships coming into sight along the horizon.

"Boy!" she called, giving him the answer:

Sailing straight for Morgania—danger adds to attraction. Our love to dear old pa!

Ethel, with her sea-glass, could observe the ships saluting the yacht; the flags tumbled at the mizzen.

She felt a thrill of pride. Roman matrons and Cleopatras and Didos, slowly dragged over the sea by their chained galley-slaves, what were they beside her? How much better it was to live nowadays! She felt herself more powerful than they had ever been. Space seemed bringing her the salutes of the East and of the distant West. She remained standing until the ships were lost to sight in the evening mists.

They were cruising along the Italian coast, visiting now one spot and now another. Sometimes there were cool streets bordered with palaces whose windows were without glass. The presence of the yachting-party drew swarms of *ragazzi*, boys and girls, more importunate than Jersey mosquitos, and harassing them for *baiocchi* and *madonne*.

Again, there were islands which from afar were like bouquets of flowers, and from near smelled of cheese and fried fish and garlic. Capri, with the sea like a liquid sky at its feet, lifted its houses along terraces like shelves. It was nothing but a going up and coming down.

"This is a perpendicular country," was Ethel's observation. "We are like flies walking along a wall."

On the days when there was no climbing of the islands that sink abruptly to the sea, the party could look at them from the deck or the library, as they passed. Ethel took the opportunity for her physical training, or put herself out of breath on a stationary bicycle, like those on which the travelers on the trans-Siberian line get the rust from their legs.

"You 'll tire yourself, Miss Rowrer," Helia said to her, when she saw what ardor she displayed.

"No, no!" said Ethel, "just show me how to do it."

Helia went through a few movements with consummate ease. There was no getting out of breath, no swelling of veins—neck and shoulders and arms were smooth as marble; for exercise only developed in her the exquisite purity of her form.

"Oh, Helia!" Ethel added, "show me how I can have a neck and shoulders and arms like yours."

During these short training lessons her friendship for Helia grew; and it is possible Ethel's only ambition was to have arms like Helia. But it was not such an ambition which the press had been attributing to her for some time back. For the newspapers were always talking about her. When the yacht entered the smallest port, it drew more attention than a war squadron. The cabbage-leaf papers of Calabria and Sicily all had something to say of Miss Rowrer. They spoke of her as a wild woman, because she had bought and saved from death the dog whom the natives were asphyxiating, in honor of foreign tourists, amid the noxious gases of a sulphur grotto. Then they had a story of some hermit on a cliff, whom she wished, so it seemed, to take to Chicago to have him bless her father's stock-yard from the top of a sky-scraper!

"What fools!" said Will. "They 'd do better to put glass in their windows and cultivate their *nespoli* and *pomidoro* than lose their time in such silliness. It 's true that time is not worth much in a country where Stromboli and Vesuvius take the place of our

Pittsburgs and Homesteads—where there 's nothing smoking on the horizon except some old volcano!"

Yet the yachting-party found pleasure in the halts when, for a change, they went to dine at the hotels. The rushing down-stairs of the clerks and porters and maîtres-d'hôtel, who got suddenly into rank and waited for their orders, amused them. For the landlords their landing was a signal to make all the hay they could while the sun was shining.

Not the cabbage-leaf papers alone, but the great journals also, printed Ethel's name. At least, she concluded this must be the case one day when she remained on board while Will and the others visited the museum at Palermo. Ethel had letters to write and sat herself down near the music-room under an awning. The yacht was moored beside a great steamer for tourists. Without being seen she could hear, above her head, the talk of these cosmopolitan people, familiar with the Pyramids and the Acropolis, the Smyrna bazaars and Monte Carlo. The whole international swarm knew the *Columbia* by name. On the steamer they were talking travel and trade and the weather. Ethel heard her name pronounced along with the rest. They were discussing her probable marriage with the Duke of Morgania—"a glorious name in Europe." "Do you know what Chartered is quoted at on the Stock Exchange?" "They 'll be a magnificent couple!" "The big Pyramid is seven hundred feet less than the Eiffel Tower." "She 'd be a charming duchess!" "The best chance Morgania ever had!"

Then all the voices were lost in the siren's wailing,



"She dreamed under a sky studded with stars"

long drawn out. The steamer shook itself gently, and issued from the port, leaving Ethel in a reverie.

"Reigning duchess! Queen of Antioch! Lady Knight of Malta!" All this—she acknowledged it to herself—had already passed through her brain. It had even amused her to see how timid the duke was in her presence. She had to say but a word,—not even that,—merely to encourage him with a smile, to see him at her feet. But the newspapers were in too great a hurry. They spoke of something that was not yet decided. She would see; she had never so well appreciated her power as since her departure from Marseilles. Everybody in the world seemed to know her. True enough, across the Red Sea and India and Japan,—everywhere, to the other side of the earth, as far as 'Frisco, it would have been just the same.

The voyage continued tranquilly. Villages at the foot of the rugged Calabrian cliffs saw the yacht passing by, white upon the blue sea, or at night shining with lights like a meteor.

At that hour, most of all after dinner, it was pleasant on the bridge. Will walked backward and forward, and smoked his cigar. Grandma, half asleep, looked at the sea, which reminded her of her Western prairies. At her side, to give her pleasure, Phil picked his banjo. Caracal was bored; he had verified the fact that no one had yet opened his book.

Ethel had other things to do. Stretched out in her bamboo chair, she dreamed under a sky studded with stars.

CHAPTER II

ETHEL'S VICTORY

PHIL, ever since the day of the hunt, had also been living in a dream.

He was sure that Ethel knew nothing of his past. He even suspected the events to which she had alluded, for he knew Will's story well. Moreover, she had since then shown herself more amiable than ever to him. He might have thought himself more encouraged than ever to pay her court and to forget Helia more and more. But just the contrary happened. Within himself he felt a passion storm going on, with sudden illumination of vivid lightning flashes. Then all sank back into shadow.

He no longer dared look Helia in the face. Under Ethel's clear eyes his conscience had awakened.

One evening, weary of the ideas that beset him, Phil had thrown himself on a sofa in the music-room, when he saw Ethel enter, seat herself, and absently take up a book which chanced to be lying there. She cut one page and looked through it, two pages, ten pages. Then, suddenly, she arose angrily. Phil was astounded.

"Do you understand?" Ethel asked him. "He dares

to offer me this filthy book with the author's compliments! I have only read a few lines, and it nauseates me."

"Of what book are you speaking, Miss Rowrer?" Phil asked.

"Of 'The House of Glass,' which Caracal has dared to offer me." And Ethel showed Phil the volume, with its modern-style cover decorated by creeping plants and monkeys' tails.

"Would you believe it?" Ethel continued. "The poor fool is trying to be gallant with me. Every day he composes a sonnet in my honor. There's no great harm in that; but since he is the author of 'The House of Glass,' it has another meaning. Here, Phil, take the book, I beg of you, and throw it overboard. But, wait a minute, we'll throw to-day's sonnet with it. Only give me time to open the envelop—you'll see how grotesque it is."

Ethel opened the envelop, but she had scarcely glanced through the letter it contained when she grew pale with wrath and pride.

"What an outrage!" she exclaimed, in her fury. "See, Phil, Caracal made a mistake in addressing his envelop. He has sent the sonnet on to Paris and put here, instead of it, a letter to Vieillecloche. Richard the Lion-hearted! Those attacks which vexed me so,—they came from him. He has a family arrangement for it with Vieillecloche. Look, Phil, read, read! What do you think of that? Is it not infamous? He attacks us for pay!"

Phil was indignant. The letter left no possible doubt.

He already could see Caracal disembarked in a hurry at the first port, and going down the gangway crushed by his shame.

"But he also attacked you once, Phil. How is it you did n't pull his ears?"

"That was my great desire!" answered Phil.

"But you did not do it!"

"Let me tell you—"

"You did not do it!"

Phil, without changing a detail, told the whole story—the rage which had pushed him on to hunt for Caracal, and his feelings at sight of the poor creature a prey to his own dreams, with anguish on his tear-stained face.

"That is why I did not do it, Miss Rowrer," said Phil.

"Ah!" Ethel exclaimed, as she looked at Phil.

There was a moment of silence.

"Throw book and letter into the sea," Ethel concluded. "And, I beseech you, not a word of all this to any one!"

Phil went away, and Ethel remained alone. Within her there was something like a hurricane. What! those men, those man-monkeys who had been harassing her ever since she came to Paris,—it was all to make her buy their silence. How infamous! It humiliated her to see such obscure names mixed up with her life. And one of them was under obligations to her, living under her roof and sitting at her table! And it was he who offered her a book which might have been written by a drunken ape! Ah! if she had only known of his special talents, he would not be there now—that public



"She arose angrily"

malefactor, that little round-shouldered wretch, who dared to write her sonnets! What should she do with Caracal? Abandon him on a desert island? Or simply throw him into the water? No, not that. Hang him to the mast like a pirate? Come, now—she would not trouble her brain hunting condign punishments for him. She left the music-room, and walked on the deck; and at last, as if to wind up her long monologue with herself, she concluded: "Caracal is crazy!"

This idea, which put anger to one side and left room for pity, restored to Ethel her self-possession. "I will deal with him later on," she said.

The immense distance between herself and such a man appeared to her all at once. Caracal seemed very little to her. And what moral wretchedness! All his energy was aimed at obtaining money, and he did not even succeed! And how punished he would be some day, when he should see his bad actions taking root and growing, and their poison doing its work.

Could she even understand the case? Who could ever know the extreme need, the passions which urge on a man like Caracal? Perhaps his was not consummate vice; perhaps he would repent some day. He was poor and alone, and she was powerful and rich, and perhaps might be a reigning duchess to-morrow—if she would only say yes with a nod. Yet here she was allowing herself to be embittered by the snarling of a poor fool. A queen, and she could not pardon! Phil had been more generous and humane than she!

She made a great effort to conquer her remorseless attitude—and won.

CHAPTER III

A CASTLE OF THE ADRIATIC

WHEN the yacht moored in front of the ducal castle of Morgania, Morgana was surely absent, for no fantastic mirage welcomed their coming. Out of courtesy to the duke, a salvo of cannon was fired from the yacht; and the salute was returned, shot by shot, from the bastion.

"Poor duke!" said grandma. "We are making him waste his powder!"

The yachting-party witnessed, indeed, a grand spectacle. It was the country itself, with the forests in its valleys and its uplands ragged with wild rocks. You could imagine paths winding around precipices, and rivulets falling down the crags like shining swords. High up and far away, with its base lost in the mist and its summit lighted by the rays of the sun, the Kutsch-kom Mountain closed in the horizon.

The port was at the end of a gulf, with two gigantic cliffs reaching out at the sides. The yachting-party was still fresh from their view of the white terraces of the Achilleion of Corfu, with its marble statues and its orange-trees; and they looked with astonishment at this corner full of shadows, with the thousand-year-old castle

perched upon its rock. It was seated on lofty and solid buttresses. A rampart flanked by thick bastions defended it; and stunted box-trees stretched over it their dark branches. Behind, wide, deep passages led up to battlemented towers.

At its feet the little city interlaced its narrow streets. You felt that it was builded in feudal times, and had been constructed under the master's eye, and by his orders. Later, it had pushed back its walls and extended into the plain. A dike by the beach, strewn with fallen boulders, sheltered it against the sea. A road up an embankment, broken by intervals of steps, led up from the city to the castle. Everything seemed weighted down with the years,—the Byzantine domes of churches, Oriental minarets, Frankish towers; everywhere you felt the succession of the ages.

"It is a romantic country," said Ethel. "There is no need of a mirage to believe one's self in the heart of the Middle Ages. We have only to look at the setting of the scene to be transported centuries back. All these old things must reek with superstition. If you stayed here long, Will, you, too, would end by believing in Morgana. See," added Ethel, as amused as a child, "see, she is smiling at us! That shining point up there, above the Gothic portal—it is Morgana's window,—the window the duke was telling us about,—do you remember, grandma? Up there, in the tower front!"

Everybody looked where she was pointing, but just then the reflection of the sun's rays disappeared, and the window was quenched in shadow.

The bells of the city, ringing the Angelus in the

evening calm, sounded like a salutation to Morgana. They had seen Loreto and its Casa Santa, brought thither by angels; the cathedral church of San Ciriaco, in Ancona, once a temple of Venus; Ravenna, where the heroine Amalberga was deified; Venice, protected by its winged lions. So, after their long cruise in this sea of legend, they came well prepared to study the people's superstitions and the folk-lore of Morgania. They tasted, in anticipation, the pleasure of seeing the daily life of the castle, wherein there had been no change for centuries.

Every one seemed to have important things to do. On the morrow Phil was to put his Morgana picture in place, and retouch it on the spot. Ethel and Will were to go on an excursion. Caracal would delve into ducal archives. Grandma was already *blasé* on these cities of pigmies, wherein music takes the place of the noise of foundries, and where men sleep with their heads in the shade and their feet in the sun while they digest their garlic. Grandma would remain on deck and look at Morgania over her glasses.

"I hope, M. Caracal, you will write a book on Morgania and its folk-lore," said Ethel. "You would find pathetic things into which this people must have put their love and faith. It would be a rest after the cruel studies which you devote, it seems, to modern society."

In her manner of speaking to Caracal, it was perceptible that Ethel wished to be merciful. That evening when she had discovered everything, Phil hardly dared come up on deck; but the next day he was greatly surprised to find Ethel as smiling as ever, and Caracal

amiable as usual. Ethel was even talking with interest to Caracal, asking questions and seeming to study the man.

From the dining-room, through the port-holes, they could see the gray mass of towers. A few lights were shining along the hills; and beyond stretched away a great wall of rocks and the somber woods. The yachting-party admired the grandeur of the landscape as they ate their peach ice-cream.

"I want to see the sorceress," said Ethel, "provided they don't accuse me of wishing to take her off to America like Richard the Lion-hearted."

"As for me," said Helia, "I should dearly like to see the defile where Morgana stopped the invasion."

"We shall go together," answered Ethel; "and I hope the gentlemen will accompany us. For me, it is a place of pilgrimage; it will do us good to compare our useless lives with that of the heroine. We shall gather from it resolution to be brave and energetic, without prejudice, of course, to our right to cry out for the least little ache. Never mind; for a few hours we shall have understood what duty is."

"But duty does n't always mean that one should fight," said Phil. "It takes other forms as well."

"It always consists in fighting," said Ethel; "but not always against some one else—oftenest it is against ourselves."

"There is no one slain in that case," remarked Caracal. "The blows we strike ourselves are never mortal—we are careful to strike with the flat of the blade!"

"That 's the way they punish cowards," said Ethel.

They were interrupted by a lackey announcing the coming of the Duke of Morgania.

They had just finished dining, and they went up on deck to receive the duke. Helia and Sœurette retired.

Without, everything was in shadow. A dense crowd thronged the jetty. The searchlight of the yacht threw its rays upon the shore and brought out here and there white minarets and roofs and domes. A swarm of people—men, women, and children—half blinded by the light, stared at the yacht. The shining of their eyes could be seen; here there was the glitter of a poniard-handle, and there the glow of silver buckles. There were men in great drugget cloaks over their white fustanelle, and women clad in long red garments, which fell straight as on figures in shrines. Anxious faces might be seen, with scared expressions; and from the crowd, pressed together like a herd, mounted up a confused murmur.

The word of command was heard; and there was a sound of oars striking the water. A small boat came alongside, a rope was thrown out, and the ladder lowered; and Monseigneur, the Duke of Morgania, came up. The light fell full upon him. The duke bowed respectfully to the ladies, and shook the men by the hand, like a boon companion.

"I 'm not putting you out too much, I hope?"

"We are delighted to see you," said grandma. "Come into the music-room."

"Don't be alarmed, monseigneur; we shall not have music!" added Ethel.

"You are right," said the duke; "no music is worth the sound of friendly voices. How happy I am to see

you again! I thank you for coming,—I seem to be leaving my exile.”

The descendant of Morgana and of Rhodaïs offered his arm to grandma, to enter the salon. As soon as they were seated, conversation began, as if they had left each other but the day before; it was familiar and gay, as among members of the same social world.

“What is the news in Paris?”

“We do not come from there. Talk to us about the sorceress,” said Ethel.

“On the contrary, let us not speak of her! The country is upside down; every one is losing his head. I should not be astonished if, to-morrow, when the people see you, they should all cry, ‘Morgana!’”

“Why, that would amuse me immensely!” said Ethel. “How is it possible for you to be bored in such a country? It must be always interesting.”

“Oh, very, very interesting!” said the duke. “But I should prefer something else.”

“And yet, to lead the people!—and then, what about your heroines,—Morgana and Rhodaïs and Bertha,—all those valiant women?”

“Ah! that’s what we need nowadays,” said the duke. “Perhaps one valiant woman like those ancestors of mine would save Morgania!”

“Is Morgania threatened to that degree?” asked Ethel. “We were counting on long excursions into the interior.”

“You come at a bad time for that, Miss Rowrer!”

In a few words he gave an impressive description of the state of the country. Everywhere was the expecta-

tion of war, with all its disquiet. Fields were uncultivated, and the region of the Moratscha was already all but emptied of its inhabitants. Bands of fugitives were coming in every day, with a pitiful procession of Christians, chased from Albania by the Turks. "You speak of excursions to the Castellum. I greatly fear you 'd not be able to do water-color sketches there. At most you might take kodak shots at brutes always ready to fire on strangers and pillage them. The state of things is insupportable. However, I will have you accompanied by a squad of soldiers."

"How will it all end?" Phil asked.

"I count on the aid of the Great Powers," said the duke.

Will and Phil could not help smiling. The duke himself watched the smoke of his cigar with an enigmatic air. Perhaps he saw in it the image of the stability and fixity of design of the Great Powers.

"Don't count too much on them," said Will.

"Meanwhile," the duke added, "you must consider yourselves quite safe in my stronghold, where I shall be greatly honored to offer you hospitality. Your rooms will be as large as churches, and you shall have an immense stone staircase for yourselves alone."

"You must be kind enough to excuse me, Monsieur le Duc," said grandma.

"Well, Morgania is yours!" the duke answered, as he rose to take his departure. "I shall be only too happy to be useful to you,—you must dispose of me at your pleasure!"

As the duke crossed the threshold, he saw Sœurette running by.

"I know that child," said the duke.

"And her sister also!" Ethel said, repressing a smile, for Parisian gossip had informed her of the duke's admiration for Helia. "She is on board, traveling with us."

"Let her, too, come to the castle," said the duke. "The little girl will be charming company for my son; his life is not any too gay, and with these continual troubles the future is still darker for a ducal heir."

"Poor child!" said grandma.

The duke, before he left them, insisted again on the danger of excursions. He was getting ready to go down when Helia appeared, looking for Sœurette.

"Mlle. Helia," said the duke, "I am happy to see you again," and he bowed to her with his perfect tact.

Helia had heard the end of the conversation. She came just as the duke was speaking of a possible invasion.

"And you, Mlle. Helia," he added, with a smiling air of protection, "what would you do if you were attacked? You know there is going to be fighting in our country."

"That 's very easily settled, monseigneur," Helia said, with a voice in which there was a thrill as of self-sacrifice. "If there 's question of fighting, I will do my part!"

"What an Amazon!" the duke said, looking at Helia with a smile. "So if the occasion demanded you would do like my ancestresses: you 'd sleep on the mountain-

side, in the snow and rain night and day, to give an example!"

"Yes, monseigneur," said Helia.

The duke made his final bows, with a diplomatic sense of degrees answering to the differences of rank between grandma and Ethel and Helia, and then went down to his boat, which was rowed rapidly away.

There was not a cheer on the shore for the duke. A dull silence reigned on the jetty, broken only by confused expressions of anxiety. Fingers pointed to the yacht, as if to say, "What is it?" No doubt they imagined it to be some powerful envoy of the great nations. Meanwhile the duke disappeared in the night.

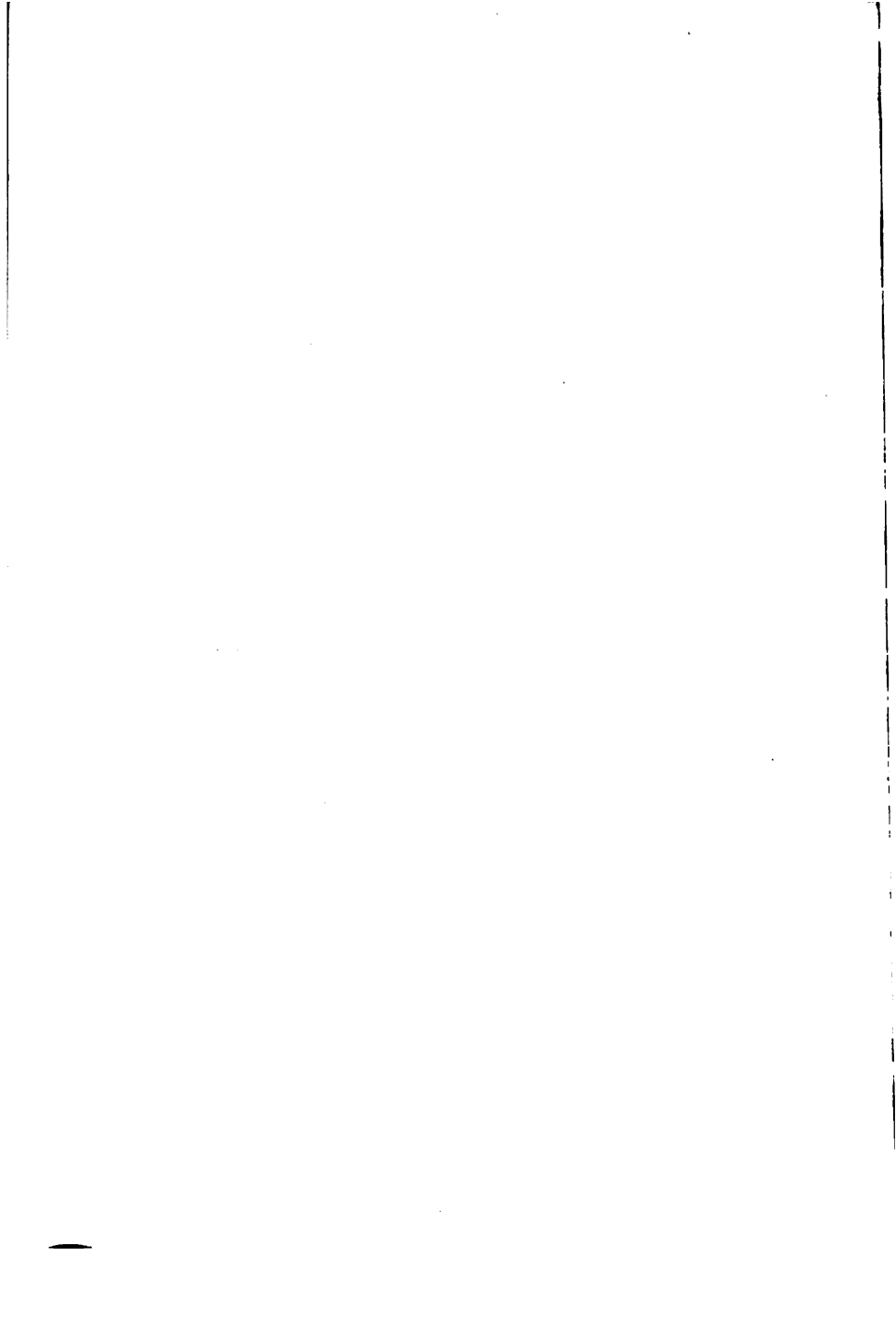
The searchlight wavered for a moment, and then fell on the castle. The people on the jetty were no longer visible, lost in the shadow. But the murmur of the crowd was still heard, and a dim reflected light gave the city a phantasmal look, while beyond might be divined the deserted country, the mountains and valleys.

"I don't understand the duke," said Ethel, in a low voice. "He should be thrilled at the thought of recreating a people. The duke must be wanting in resolution. I seem to see him in his castle regulating questions of etiquette, brightening up a little the faded gilt of his stage-setting, and regretting Paris—a stranger to his people's aspirations. Yet how many things are to be done here—wretchedness to console, ignorance to enlighten! In his place I would never have waited for them to come to fetch me back from Paris."

Ethel suddenly interrupted herself. "See!" she



The Searchlight on the Castle



called to Will and grandma, "see, Morgana smiles to us again! See the light yonder, behind Helia!"

Just then the searchlight illumined the top of the Gothic portal. The Morgana window glittered through the night.

"Do not stir, I entreat you!" Ethel said to Helia. "The window throws a halo around you!"

Indeed, they could see the dark profile of Helia in relief against the glittering background. She was superb, standing upright, with her head raised proudly, and one hand grasping a ratline of the mast. She looked as if she were wielding an immense lance, like a warrior-woman of heroic days.

CHAPTER IV

THE LITTLE DUKE

THE next day, as they entered the Hall of the Ancestors, grandma dropped the duke's arm to seat herself in a great chair. But the chair was in carved wood and very hard. Decidedly, this was a feudal castle, and much less comfortable than a Chicago home.

Ethel thanked the little Adalbert with a big kiss. The child, accompanied by his father, had been the guide of Ethel and grandma. He had climbed up and down steps too high for him; but Ethel gave him her hand; and the child explained and mentioned names, as he showed mosaics and statues in the crypt. "My grandfather, Amalfrid IX, my ancestor Enguerrand, Lady Rhodaïs, Bertha, St. Morgana";—one would have said he was the familiar genius of the place, a little wandering soul of the dead, doing to the living the honors of the past.

When they issued forth from these gloomy vaults, Adalbert hastened to go off and play with Sœurette behind the pillars of the great hall.

For some days the place was the scene of constant festivity. The noise of laughter was heard; there was talk and the movement of life, and roses garnished the

vases. Servants carried back and forth cakes and fruits. At times, beneath the arches, there rolled an uncertain harmony,—it was Ethel trying the old piano.

What a change for Adalbert, who was used to being alone with his aged tutor. Until then his walks along the ramparts, amid the box-trees twisted by the wind, had been his chief amusement. How often he had wished to go down and untie the old boat moored at the foot of the wall, and sail out into the bay!

But the duke, with all his frequent traveling, had the child whom he adored looked after with the greatest care. It was the last of his race,—their last hope. If the child should die, to which of his powerful neighbors would the duchy fall as a prey? So the child grew up in the old castle with the portraits of his forefathers looking down at him; and his imagination awoke to the recital of ancient legends. In his dreams by night he saw gentle visions bending over him. Now, all had grown alive, and the visions were realities. There were big friends to dance him on their knees; there was a kind old fairy speaking softly to him in a foreign tongue. Two young maidens, more beautiful than those of his dreams, took him in their arms; and for playmates he had a delightful little girl who taught him games and called him Monseigneur. Ethel looked at Adalbert playing with Sœurette; the child was bright and gay, and she complimented the duke.

“It is because your visit gives him such pleasure,” said the duke,—“as much as to me, were it possible! I don’t know what he will do when you go away,—poor Adalbert! He will be very sorry.”

Ethel looked thoughtful. The duke leaned over the back of her chair, and, so as to be heard by her alone, spoke slowly:

"It will be his apprenticeship in life. Separation from what one loves most in the world—that is where everything ends; and yet, perhaps—"

Ethel did not answer, but remained with her head resting on her hand. She understood quite well what the duke wished to say. She looked aimlessly before her, thinking of all that she had seen, of all these parade-rooms and *chambres d'honneur*, and the gloomy stairways. The gallery, adorned with portraits and suits of heavy armor, haunted her. The donjons and courtyards, the bastions and the moat and rusty drawbridge,—she saw it all in her mind. In the old time, on festive days, what a grand air it must all have had, with the heralds' trumpets, with banqueting and tournaments, where fair duchesses crowned those who vanquished! Or, again, at the home-coming from the wars, when the Lady Knight of Malta, Queen of Antioch, saluted with her sword the torn banners! What a magnificent opportunity there would be to bring this all back to sight, if she should make Morgania live again with her millions! The castle could be made the most princely abode in Europe. But she wished to know more of Duke Conrad. She wished to judge of him without being dazzled by his titles. She was not to marry ancestors, but a husband whom she might love!

"Your castle is as big as a mountain," she said to the duke; "you go up and go down. I am now in full training for my excursion to the Roman ruins, and to



Visiting the Castle



that not less venerable ruin, the sorceress. When shall we go, monseigneur?"

"Presently," said the duke, as he pointed to packages and luggage by the door of the hall. "But if I were you, I would not go to Drina," he added earnestly.

"Do you fear for the escort which accompanies us?" said Ethel, with a smile.

"No; but if harm should come to you, what grief for me!" replied the duke.

"Nothing will happen to us!" said Ethel. "And then, can you imagine me going back to Chicago without having had a single kodak-shot at brigands from nature?"

"I am unable to accompany you, and I regret it," said the duke. "I have to make an inspection of the coast, and I ought also to receive a delegation of the people."

"We shall go alone," said Ethel. "St. Morgana will protect us."

Something happened which greatly amused Ethel and grandma; and the duke himself could not help smiling. Adalbert broke off his play with Sœurette, and came running to his father. He looked in turn at the Morgana of the picture and at Helia, who was sitting near it. The great canvas, illuminated by the stained-glass window, harmonized splendidly with the hall. At the distance where Ethel and the duke were placed, there was nothing to hide the view of the painting. They saw all its details, even the crowd which Phil had depicted along the shore; it might have been the same crowd which thronged the jetty the evening of the yacht's ar-

rival, when the booming of the cannon drew the people to the sea.

But the crowd in Phil's picture was more animated and gay. Instead of the gloom of discouragement, it seemed transfigured by hope. It acclaimed the heroine; Rhodaïs and Bertha and Thilda, with swords in their hands, appeared amid the clouds. Everything in the magnificent picture was strange and supernatural.

The child had just been struck by the resemblance between the model and the portrait of Morgana; his astonishment was touching, as he looked from one to the other. He asked himself if the ancient legends were not realized at last! if Morgana herself had not risen again from the past, to be painted by Phil.

"My father," said the child to the duke, "is it really Morgana? Tell me!"

"What a child!" answered the duke, taking him in his arms to kiss him. "He believes that Mlle. Helia is Morgana." And he looked at Ethel as if to say, "I know full well who Morgana is—it is you!"

CHAPTER V

VISITING THE SORCERESS

THE conveyance and escort for Ethel, with Suzanne and Helia, were awaiting them at the other side of the city. There were also horses for Will and Phil. Sœurette was to remain behind, to keep company with the little Monseigneur. Grandma returned to the yacht, quite out of sympathy with living in old castles which have plenty of stairways but no elevators.

Ethel had already seen the city; yet she had an ever new pleasure in these comings and goings. Her inquisitiveness was satisfied to the full. She was making studies of a population as ignorant as it was unknown, anchored to its old-time customs, and closed in by its mountains, like monks within their cloisters. Yet beneath all this torpor one could feel unconquerable pride and love of vengeance and of glory.

These motionless shopkeepers would sell you a pair of slippers or a whole outfit of pistols and daggers for the belt. All these warlike accoutrements were amusements to Ethel; she found them even on the porter who peacefully brought her packages from the hall of the throne to the carriage.

As soon as they had come down from the castle, after

turning back a last time to salute the duke, whom etiquette bound to the ramparts, along with Caracal, the party entering the town seemed passing through a haunt of brigands. Pieces of basket-work hung before the shops. Suspended on nails in the shade were the bridles of horses, shining with brass, and red leather saddles, and swords. Savage eyes looked out to see them go by.

The season for heavy siestas had passed. All the day long the crowd thronged the street. Shepherds, clad in hairy goatskins and shod with leather sandals, mingled with soldiers, at whose side was slung long Albanian rifles. They talked politics as they drank their coffee.

Others displayed the cylindric turban, the knit silken girdle, and the dagger-sheath of brass. Women with knit boots, and dressed in scarlet embroidered with arabesques, sang to the accompaniment of the *guzla*—that lyre with its single string made of twisted hair. They droned out a psalmody of mountaineers, recalling the ancient glories of their country.

Adalbert's tutor, who accompanied the party, translated and explained the songs.

The blood sprang to the cheeks of the impetuous queen ;
Then every soldier satisfied his vengeance ;
None like Morgana !

Swift and daring she struck this one and pierced that one !
Ah, she poured out to her enemies a bitter drink !
Thus they all perished !

Everywhere the impassioned looks and voices of the crowd made them feel that war was near. All these

peasants, coming from different regions, were stirred by a common desire—to see the return of the heroic days when Morgana and Rhodais and the great ancestresses had led the people to victory.

Every one in the street drew aside as the party passed. The rumor had run that a queen was to visit the duke—a young maiden from unknown lands beyond the sea, where the sun sets. Which one was it? Ethel or Helia? Perhaps both? The people were in admiration at their noble air. Women grown prematurely old in the harsh labor of the fields were in ecstasy at their beauty. To them the two young girls seemed of a higher race, like that of the saints and heroines in the stained-glass windows of their churches; they followed them with their eyes, and took up again their chants in honor of Morgana.

Morgana was the universal inspiration; she was everywhere. In the back of gloomy shops icons were to be seen—St. Morgana, with the Virgin, dimly lighted by a burning float. There was something touching in the faith which this people had in their national legends.

Ethel appreciated the silence of the crowd on the jetty that evening when the duke quitted the yacht. No; his people did not recognize themselves in him. They still had a certain respect for him, for the sake of his glorious ancestors; but the people were prepared to abandon him, and to take shelter in their dreams.

One would have said that the power of the state was no longer in the ducal castle, but far away by the spurs of the Kutsch-kom Mountain, where lived the sorceress, the primitive oracle of her race. They paid no atten-

tion to their effeminate master, and listened only to this ancestral voice, that foretold national happiness.

"Phil," said Ethel, "you know the proverb, 'When you are in Rome, do as the Romans do.' It's a useless recommendation, for we can't help doing it. But even if we don't act like this people, we are rather Morganian in our thoughts, are we not? And it is the women who interest me chiefly," Ethel continued. "It is their heroines whose remembrance fills the people with a hope beyond realization. And yet—what if it should be realized? We can never be certain."

Phil was silent,—Helia was at his side.

"You look a little tired," Ethel said to her.

Phil took Helia's arm; and they walked together, talking little, making indifferent remarks to each other, each alone with his own innermost thoughts. They were leaving the weavers' street for that of the armorers.

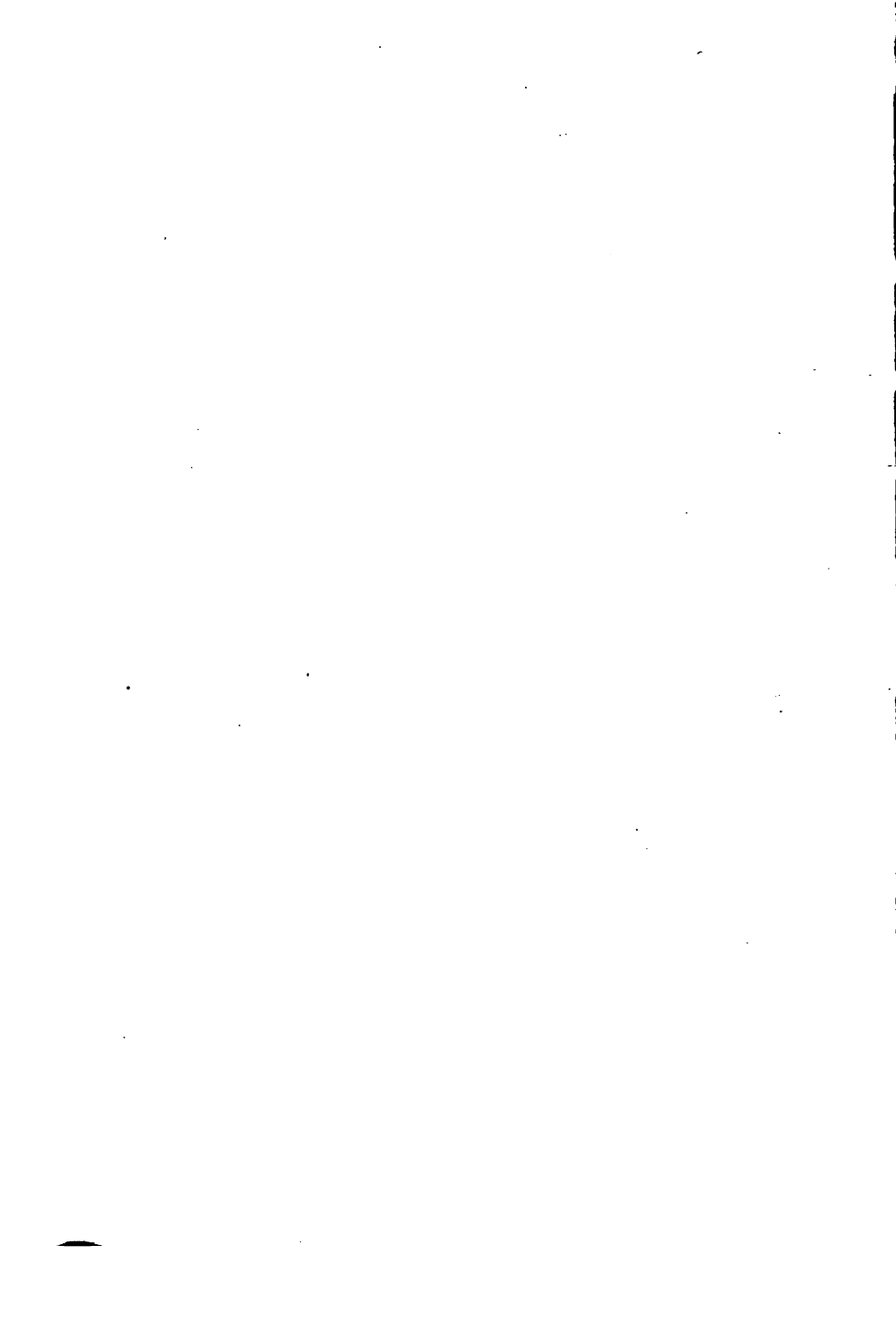
"There is enough here to cut the throats of a nation!" Phil could not help observing.

They were between the lines of shops. The sun's rays fell straight down, striking flashes from the niello work of the rifles, from the ivory of the Albanese pistols, and from the clusters of daggers hanging from their hooks. They were of every form and size: the Malay creese, curved zigzag like a lightning-flash; Venetian stilettos, as pointed as a bee's sting; and others pierced with holes, for their amalgam of arsenic and grease, looking like blotches. Besides the slender, elegant blade to be worn at the garter, there were horn-handled knives, real bandits' weapons, made to stick into the back.

Phil thought of the landscape he had painted for



“Does the sight of so many weapons make you nervous?”



Ethel when he had come from the circus, and of the man who had sought for a knife in his pocket, threatening Helia from a distance.

That very moment, as if some mysterious sympathy had been set up between Helia and himself, he felt the young girl's arm tremble in his own. Helia pressed against him in a movement of unreasoned fear.

"What is the matter, Helia?" he asked. "Does the sight of so many weapons make you nervous?"

"No, it is not that," said Helia, looking at the marketplace thronged with people.

"What are you looking at?" Phil insisted. "Has any one frightened you? Do me the honor to fear nothing when on my arm, Helia!"

"Oh! I am afraid of nothing," answered Helia. "Forgive me! it was surprise. I thought I saw some one, recognized some one; but no, I must be crazy—"

"You have seen some one? Whom?"

Helia was on the point of answering, "Socrate!" but she did not pronounce the name. Already he had been spoken of too much between her and Phil. Besides, she no longer could see the man. Yet she would have sworn that but now, there, behind that group, she had beheld the flat face of Socrate looking at her stealthily. It must have been an illusion. Was she now going to meet Socrate everywhere? Already, on board the yacht, one evening when she was looking from the deck into the boiler-room, she thought she had seen him in the red rays of the fires with his eyes lifted toward her, shining from a face black with coal-dust. Surely, it must have been because, when they left Marseilles, Suzanne

burst into laughter, saying: "See the stokers they are taking on! There is one who looks like Socrate!"

"Do you wish me to find out?" Phil asked.

"No; remain here, Phil—here, at my side. It was just an idea I had—but do not leave me," she added, pressing against him once more.

"A woman's idea!" thought Phil. "I can understand it, in this country where they sell daggers in clusters as they sell bananas with us."

The attention of both was drawn away by a change of scene. They had left the city behind them and were already in the open country. Peasants were driving their mules or pushing carts, with children perched upon bundles of straw and packs of rags. They were coming to augment the tumult of those who had taken to the city for refuge.

"It seems to me we are going the wrong way," said Ethel, laughing; "every one is turning his back to us."

"Why, we 've just started," said Phil. "We must go on now to the end."

"Of course," Ethel said, in delight; "and it 's so exciting! I 'd go through fire and flames to see something really new. Come, here are our horses waiting for us!"

"What luck!" cried Suzanne, "we are going to see a sorceress—b-r-r-r-r! it sends a shiver down one's back to think of it!"

This childish outburst put everybody in good humor. Will and Phil mounted their horses. Ethel, Helia, and Suzanne seated themselves on the benches or the luggage in the conveyance; and the escort started off.

They went straight into the mountains. Except the guides and two soldiers in the picturesque costumes of the klephts,—white gaiters and short jacket, like that of a bull-fighter, with a fustanelle shirt,—no one accompanied the tourists. The tutor had gone back to Adalbert. There was no danger as far as the convent of Semavat Evi, or "House of Heaven," and there a larger escort was awaiting them and would accompany them to the frontier. Ethel asked herself in what condition she would reach the place, so shockingly rough was the road. Suzanne, seated on a valise which she named her *strapontin* (an aisle-seat in a theater), was having immense fun.

"It's just like a scene in the Chatelet Theater," she said, pointing to the landscape where the huge castle overlooked the old city huddled together at its feet, with the yacht anchored out in the blue sea. She shook with laughter as the wheel passed over a projecting rock and all but overthrew the conveyance.

Ethel and Helia looked at the two soldiers marching ahead. The flapping of their fustanelle skirts, when they leaped over the gutters, gave them the air of two ballet-dancers. The contrast between their brigand heads and the collection of weapons at their belts, and their long, white, agile legs was so comic that Ethel and Helia did not perceive they were going along beside a precipice. The cultivated land was passed, and they could see only tufts of thorny shrubs. Suzanne alone gave a note of gaiety to the bleak landscape. Ethel let her talk on, without listening, and soon Suzanne was silent, conquered like the others by the melancholy sight.

The horizon broadened around them, rising up on either side. Below, the plains stretched out far as the eye could reach. The road was like a thread lying along the ground. By this road, at their feet, they would come back from the excursion. Ethel looked with interest at this pathway of so many invasions. The rude mountaineers of Albania had followed it to the sea, and more than once invaders had filled it with the flashing of their swords. Who could know whether Morgana was not to pass again through such a period of disaster? There was now no living wall to stay the waves.

The wagon went up and up in endless turnings. Suddenly, as they crossed a plateau where ragged grass was growing, a chant arose, monotonous and solemn, and repeated by the echoes. On every side they seemed to hear lamentations and groans issuing forth from the earth or falling from the clouds.

"Where are we?" asked Ethel, stirred from her reverie. "I see no one."

"It is the shepherds over there," said Helia.

Ethel perceived, in the midst of a lean flock, beside a fire whose smoke mounted straight upward, a group of shepherds singing. It was one of the *prismés* which they sing from one mountain to the other. Ethel was greatly impressed by these spontaneous chants of the desert. In them, hoarse cries alternated with sharp, high cadences and a quickening measure. An impression of grandeur was left behind by this singing in the solitude. Ethel thought with pity of the old untuned piano in the castle, and of the sound of the banjo, thin

as the humming of flies among the massive pillars of the throne-room. The castle itself,—what was it compared with these huge natural towers overlooking the road, with their giant steps made of rocks that had slid down?—or to these ravines, like somber courtyards,—to these measureless caverns opening like vaults, in the depths of which the schist rock shone like stained-glass windows? And still they mounted up, turning around these strongholds of a country made for liberty. They were approaching the grotto of the sorceress.

A joyful burst of laughter drew Ethel from her reverie. Behind her, seated astride a package, Suzanne was in an ecstasy of delight.

“The ballet!—oh, Miss Rowrer, the ballet is beginning—look at the *danseuses*!”

Suzanne was choking, stuffing her handkerchief into her mouth not to let herself be heard.

The two soldiers, won by the music’s enthusiasm, were leaping in time with sharp cries, now squatting to earth and now brandishing their rifles, swaying right and left, and twirling their legs while their fustanella skirts stood out straight. Like monkeys drunk with cocoa-milk, they gave inarticulate cries—“Yoo! yoo!”

“Encore!” cried Suzanne.

“My kodak!” said Ethel.

“I ’m sitting on it!” said Suzanne; “I can hear it crack!”

All their gaiety had come back. Ethel felt the need of shaking off the mysterious influence that had been depressing her since they set out.

“Really, I ’m too simple,” she said; “I shall wind up

by believing in their sorceress. Poor old woman, who will sell us four-leaved clover against thunder, coral horns against the evil eye, fetishes and prayer-mills and garlic *pommade*."

"How happy Poufaille would be here!" thought Suzanne.

"What a journey!" Ethel continued. "What roads! I am all shaken up! At least they ought to build a narrow-gage railroad in such a country!" she said to Will, who had come up with her.

"It would n't pay," said Will. "But if I owned these mountains I 'd take the ore out of them."

"Mademoiselle would be very good if she would ask for me a toad's-hair chaplet," Suzanne said, in a low tone.

"Ask? From whom? From my brother?"

"No! From the old sorceress!"

"But toads have n't hair, Suzanne!"

"It was M. Caracal told me."

"Oh, if you 're going to believe all that he says—"

"Poor old woman!" observed Will, "living in such a hole, stuck to her rock like an oyster in its shell!"

"That does n't prevent her consulting the stars and occupying herself with Jupiter, and knowing a hundred and ten ways of foretelling the future."

"A hundred and ten ways—that 's a great deal," replied Will. "Which is the best of them all?"

"Let 's count on our fingers," said Ethel. "I 'll begin. Aëromancy, by the air; aleuromancy, by flour; telomancy, by arrows—"

"—Dactylomancy, by the fingers; chiromancy, by the hand; podomancy, by the feet!" continued Phil.

"Hydromancy, by water," Ethel began again. "Rhabdomancy, by sticks—"

"That 's for Poufaille," thought Suzanne. "*Vive la rhabdomancie!*"

Just then the horses stopped, and the driver turned to the tourists, saying a few words in a low tone of voice and pointing with his finger to a recess in the rock. They had reached their journey's end. All was silent. Ethel, Helia, and Suzanne descended from the vehicle, and Will and Phil leaped from their horses.

The spot was a wild one. Before them the whole country lay outstretched. Behind them mountains were heaped together. The wind blew, tossing the horses' manes; and the great passing clouds seemed to issue forth from the mountain.

The visitors took a few steps forward and saw a black hole. It was the cavern. A rough statue of Morgana, virgin and martyr, was carved in the living rock. There were heaps of votive offerings around it—little figures of children and birds, veils and women's girdles, daggers and flowers and fruits, and the red cake which betrothed ones break before marriage. A peasant woman at her prayers, prostrate on the rock at the saint's feet, was praying with the energy of despair, and calling for vengeance.

The visitors kept on advancing, half regretting that they had come. What were they to say to the sorceress? Ethel, greatly moved, took Phil's arm. It seemed to her that her own lot was to be decided. She felt her heart

beating as they advanced to the grotto. Helia was at her side. Will was behind with Suzanne. They came to the opening and leaned forward, but saw nothing.

Little by little their eyes grew accustomed to the darkness. They could distinguish, uncertainly, in the depths, eyes that shone—and then a figure, huddled together on a bed of rushes, looking at them, motionless, with her finger to her mouth, like a statue of silence! The eyes, fixed in turn on each of them, suddenly rested upon Helia with a strange glow.

“Oh, how she looks at me!” Helia said, seizing Ethel’s arm. “Oh, *mon Dieu*, if she only will not speak! Let us go away; I entreat you, let us go away! I am afraid!”

They started back, and felt relieved when they were out of sight of the sinister eyes.

“Let us go,” said Ethel.

At the feet of St. Morgana, the suppliant one was now praying as in an ecstasy.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIGHT

MISS ETHEL BOWRER TO M^{LE}. DE GROJEAN

“On board the *Columbia*.

“**Y**OU ’LL have to hang yourself, my valorous Yvonne, for we have had our battle without you! The truth is, we have narrowly escaped being spitted and roasted. That’s a promising beginning, is n’t it? Grand’mère will be delighted that you were not there; but you will regret it if you read my letter to the end. I say ‘if,’ for it’s a whole history. Excuse my writing feverishly, on the gallop; I am in a hurry to tell you. I promised you an adventure in Morgania—and here is one. Only I am not its heroine, alas! For it is a story of heroism, and that of the purest. As for me, I feel the need of crying aloud my admiration for that noble young girl. Are you curious? It is Helia; you understand—Helia! You remember her? She was one of those who ‘don’t count’!

“I come to the facts.

“We have left Semavat Eli—a Heavenly House, wherein we were eaten up by vermin, and served by good monks who amused themselves teaching thrushes to whistle. The next day, from early morning, as

soon as they had let us down,—by the window, if you please, in great wicker baskets (for in this country monasteries have no doors),—Suzanne seated herself on my kodak, Helia and I on our valises, Will and Phil straddled their horses, and—forward, march! over pointed rocks to Thermopylæ! that is, to their Thermopylæ, which is the defile of the Moratscha. It was a kind of pilgrimage we were doing—five in all, not counting our escort of ballet-dancers, who were waiting for us at the monastery. By that, I mean soldiers with fustanelle skirts, armed to the teeth, very white teeth in black faces, quite like wolves!

“The evening before we ’d climbed up all the way to see the sorceress—I ought to say the prophetess, and you must not laugh, I entreat you, for it would give me pain. I was never so affected in my life. From that place to Semavat Eli the country is flat, except for the horrible road. After that, we had to go down and down to the defile along the river Drina. We crossed impetuous torrents where there was not enough water for a water-color sketch, and forests dry as firewood, all bristling with thorns, so that we could not go near without leaving bits of our gowns. It was the abomination of desolation,—and down we came, down and down toward the plain; and through the plain we came back. For that matter there is nothing to see but ill-cultivated fields and dilapidated houses.

“It is a country where there are no locks. The duke told me so, to give me an idea of his people’s honesty. Suzanne, who is an amusing child, says that doors without locks are the invention of poor countries; and that there are no thieves where there is nothing to steal.



Helia facing the Assailants



"At noon we stopped. We ate and rested, and our soldiers sang and danced; and then we were off again. There were more impetuous watercourses of gravel and pebble. There were shepherds watching their goats, and red-haired women carrying burdens on their heads, and looking at us with wide-open mouths. We were near the spot.

"Imagine a wild gorge. It was the meeting of two ways, from the mountain and from the plain. Farther along was the river Drina, with its old bridge. That is the end of Morgania, which is protected by its mountains, with this defile, like Thermopylæ, as its only entrance. But, you will ask me, what about Helia?

"Patience!

"We had all got down, leaving the horses and wagons in the shade of the defile. I had a fixed idea that I would go to the middle of the frontier bridge, which belongs half to Christ and half to Mohammed, and that I would also visit the Roman ruin and the little Christian village farther on, which has a little belfry like a minaret.

"But as we drew near there were loud cries, and a headlong flight of peasants, their features distorted with fright as they ran past us. Then there was the fire and smoke of a fusillade, the tocsin sounding, and then more cries,—frightful cries,—the howling of hunted beasts, piercing the ear like a knife.

"It was all so sudden that we did n't know what to do. We all spoke at once: 'What is it?' 'What shall we do?' 'Shall we defend ourselves?' 'The soldiers!'

"There were no soldiers—fled—out of sight! We could barely see their white ballet-skirts leaping away

in every direction. We were going to have our throats cut like sheep! I remember how at that moment the frightened crowd rushed upon the bridge, and bore us back with it toward the defile. Phil grasped my arm and said to Helia and me: 'Don't be afraid; I 'm with you!' There was such fire in his eyes that I felt reassured. We went back toward the wagon, and I shut my eyes and stuffed my fingers in my ears, letting pass the waves of howling creatures,—men, women, and children,—who climbed up on the wagon or slipped beneath it, some leaping up only to fall back with convulsed features, struck down by the bullets!

"I heard Will say to me, 'Turks!' I opened my eyes. Horsemen were riding here and there through the plain, striking right and left with their sabers. Men on foot were advancing, singing harshly. I heard a general discharge, and then pitiful cries. The wagon turned cross-wise of the defile. One of our horses reared and the other fell heavily; all the luggage tumbled—the way was blocked! We were sheltered by the wagon as behind a barricade, pell-mell with the fugitives. Helia had not followed us—she was not there!

" 'Helia is lost!' Phil said to me. Pressed by the crowd as he was, he could not disengage himself to go to her aid. Through an opening in the wagon I saw her standing alone. She had not had time to take shelter with us. Bullets were whistling on every side. I no longer knew what I was doing. These were not comic-opera Turks, with gourds for helmets, and dressed in gilded rags. They were men armed with rifles and daggers. Everywhere there were the dead, everywhere there was blood. It was frightful!

"The bullets became fewer—the enemy had taken to their swords, and we were without arms, pressed upon by the crowd which clung to our garments.

"Oh, never shall I forget what I then saw. Helia, as I have said, was alone, facing our assailants. There she remained! She had snatched from one of the fugitives an enormous club. The enemy drew near. A Turk came upon her and was already stretching out his hand to seize her by the hair, when Helia whirled the club, bringing it down on the man and splitting his skull! He fell and Helia put her foot on him.

"As the man was falling Helia seized his rifle and put it quickly to her shoulder. We heard two reports, and two more of the enemy went down.

"All this passed in no time at all. Helia seemed like a supernatural being. As she remained standing upright, the attack wavered. The Turks were terror-stricken at this young maiden whose throat they had expected to cut as they passed by, and who handled these heavy weapons as if she were playing with them. I heard Helia call to us; but we could not stir. I wept with rage. How I wished to be beside her! She whirled the rifle by the end of its barrel; and with a terrific blow brought down the breech on the head of one who seemed the leader. They fell back for a moment. Meanwhile we did not remain idle; and the peasants had pulled themselves together. Phil and I, as soon as we had got ourselves loose, jumped on the wagon, after picking up rifles. Will brought back the soldiers; and when the Turks, mad with rage, and sword in hand, came rushing back upon Helia—who awaited them without flinching—they were welcomed with a discharge of bullets which stopped them

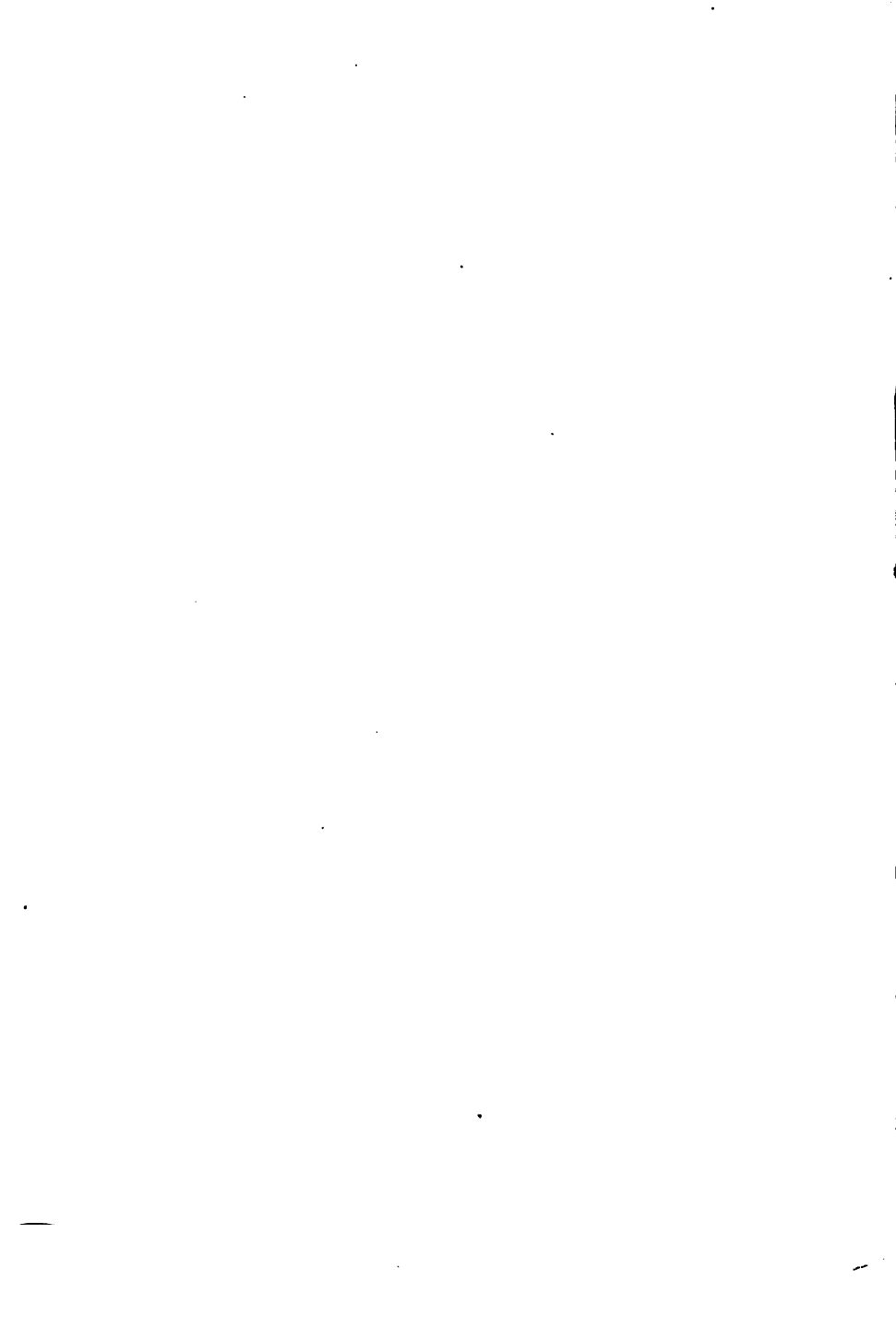
short. Our fears were over. The Turks fled, our bullets striking them in their backs, and the peasants pursuing them with sticks and stones. In a moment the bridge was free. Phil had not quitted me for an instant. He was always between me and the enemy, and superbly cool. I asked him, 'What is the matter with Helia? She seems to be looking for death!' It is certain there was something like despair in her terrible intrepidity. Phil did not answer. He seemed more moved than herself. Just then I had no time to go into the question; all of us were safe and sound; that was the main thing. The Turks had fled away, and would not soon return. We gathered up the wounded. Suzanne was everywhere at once, with a bottle in her hand. '*Qui veut la goutte, les enfants? Voilà la petite cantinière!*' ['Who wants a drink, children? Here 's the cantinière!'] The bells of the Christian village rang joyously, and the cry was taken up, and grew louder and louder: 'Morgana! Morgana!' Helia was borne in triumph. Women knelt down as she passed. The brave girl was bleeding a little; and they gathered the drops of blood on pieces torn from her gown, like the relics of a saint. For me, I was happy beyond expression. I kissed her cheeks and cried: 'Morgana!'

"'What! you, too, Miss Ethel! But I have done nothing!' answered Helia. 'I did my part, that was all.'

"'Wagons came from the village, and we put the wounded into them. One who spoke Italian told us the story. The Albanian Moslems for a long time had been threatening the Christians. They demanded a thousand Turkish pounds. They were refused, and raided the



The Return to the City



village on the day of a marriage, when every one was at the feast. They were going to invade the district of Morgania where the victims were taking refuge; but this young girl had saved everything!

"Helia had her gown all torn, and so they threw over her shoulders the mantle of the village bride. Upon her disheveled hair they placed the red symbolic head-dress, with its golden tassels.

"Helia's cart was at the head of the convoy, and the other wagons followed, filled with the wounded. Phil galloped along on an Albanian horse with red-and-white trappings. Will remained in the village, to organize the resistance. I went back to the city with Suzanne, on Helia's cart.

"It was a triumphal march. All these poor people and ourselves, whom she had saved from massacre, had eyes only for her. But she had no air of happiness! She had a slight wound in the forehead. From time to time a drop of blood fell on her gown and made a red stain. This streak of blood marked her out to the crowd. The cheers redoubled, and little children threw kisses toward her. She was indifferent to it all, and looked only at the little red stain.

"'Oh, my pretty gown,' she said, 'my pretty bridal gown is ruined!'

"The road through the valley is much shorter than that over the mountain. We were to get to the city by night, just before day-dawn. Oh, what a vision, never to be forgotten, was that night journey! You cannot believe how quickly the tidings traveled, in this country without telegraphs or railroad. Horsemen went

galloping before us. When we passed through a village there were cries of joy and men dancing by the light of torches. Priests bearing golden crosses blessed us as we passed. Helia's exploits grew from mouth to mouth, and this explained the ever-increasing enthusiasm. She had killed eight enemies with her own hand, had stopped the invasion and saved the convoy from massacre! At Gradiska she had killed twenty, and at Kolo more still.

"'You will see,' Helia said to me; 'by the time we get to the city I shall have killed the Grand Vizir and the Sultan!'

"Our escort kept on growing. It was grand when we entered the city. Helia had been hoping to find every one asleep. You would have thought you were going into a bee-hive! They wished to carry Helia in triumph to the castle. But the duke was not there—he was off on the excursion along the coast. The people will never pardon him for not having been present to share their joy and cheer the heroine.

"To wind up: I don't know how we did it, but we got back to the yacht all the same, broken and bruised and delighted, deafened by the cries, and blinded by the lights.

"Every one is resting except myself. I cannot stay quiet, and I profit by my sleeplessness to write you. Well, what did I tell you? Are you not sorry to have missed a thing like that? And I will have other things to tell you when I have the pleasure to see you again, my dear Yvonne. . . .

"P. S. The heavens are mixing themselves up in the event. You have heard of the Fata Morgana—that

wonderful mirage effect along the coast of the Adriatic (it comes from the evaporation of hot air in the lower layers, changing refraction to reflection, and so forth, and so forth; but people here simply attribute it to a fairy's enchantments).

"However that may be, I am finishing this letter just as the sun is rising, and the sky is marvelous. I am looking at great streaks of blood and crumbling towers and golden crowns—all changing form every moment. You can see in it what you wish; but, always, it is beautiful."

CHAPTER VII

THE FATEFUL DAY BEGINS

ETHEL finished her letter, and went up on deck to find grandma. A splendid day was appearing, with its marvelous light flooding space. Morgana was building her palaces in the heavenly azure. Golden darts across battlemented clouds were driving away the birds of night. The sun rose up, enormous in size. In front of the yacht the city, with its minarets and domes, showed like a vision of the Orient. The castle, scarcely outlined, seemed floating above the waters.

"Brave Helia! the heavens are celebrating her—how splendid the mirage is, grandma!" said Ethel.

"You see, Ethel," Mrs. Rowrer remarked, "mirages are not easily appreciated with glasses. At my age I perceive rather the chill of the mist."

"My dear grandma!" said Ethel, as she kissed her, "don't you think that what Helia did was simply grand? Even with your glasses you can distinguish heroism. Helia is what I call a woman! When I think that I might have done it—what would I not give to be in her place, grandma!"

"Are you jealous, Ethel?"

"Oh, grandma!"

No; Ethel was not jealous. But for the last few days nothing had gone well with her. She was not like Helia, who had so many reasons to be joyful—and who yet was sad. Ethel had genuine cares. First, she had not risen to the mark like Helia; next—and oh, what a grudge she had against Will for it!—when she saw the poor refugees without food or shelter, she remarked to her brother how much wretchedness there was to comfort, that something ought to be done. It would even be an acknowledgment of the duke's hospitality.

"It's already done!" was Will's answer. "I cabled from the city yesterday; one of our freight steamers will quit Odessa at once with grain and food."

"There I am!" Ethel said, in comic despair.

Ethel looked far off at the city and castle, for the yacht had taken to the open on account of drifting currents. She was thinking of Morgania. The manner in which the duke would understand his duty under the present circumstances would be a standard by which to judge the man.

That the duke had stayed on in Paris when he ought to have been in Morgania—that she could willingly forgive, since it was for her that he stayed. But that now he should be brave, loyal to his people, with a burning zeal for progress and all that is good—that would be more pleasing to her than all his attentions.

"What is the matter, grandma? You have something on your mind," said Ethel to her grandmother, who was looking toward the mountains.

"It is nothing," said grandma. "I was thinking of

Will, who is over there, and fearing some accident might happen to him."

"Just now he risks nothing," said Ethel. "It is all enthusiasm among the people. Will is to take the most pressing measures. The enemy is sure to return, but the duke will be ready—unless he wastes too much time."

They heard the stroke of oars, and a small boat came alongside.

"I 'm sure it 's the duke coming to congratulate us," said Ethel. "He must have returned—and you 'll see, grandma, he will thank me for saving Morgania, and will put his heart at my feet! He will say the people wish me, that they are crying for me! Watch him, grandma, when I tell him that it is not I, it is Helia! You 'll see his expression: 'Helia! hum—hum—charming, very charming, but, really—' "

"You judge the duke wrongly, Ethel."

"She 's right, all the same!" thought Suzanne.

"The duke knows what he 's about, grandma! But it is not he," she said, looking over at the boat. "They are two—in long coats! That 's not local color."

"They are my two bears—Zrnitschka, Bjelopawlitji! *Sauve qui peut!*" Suzanne muttered to herself.

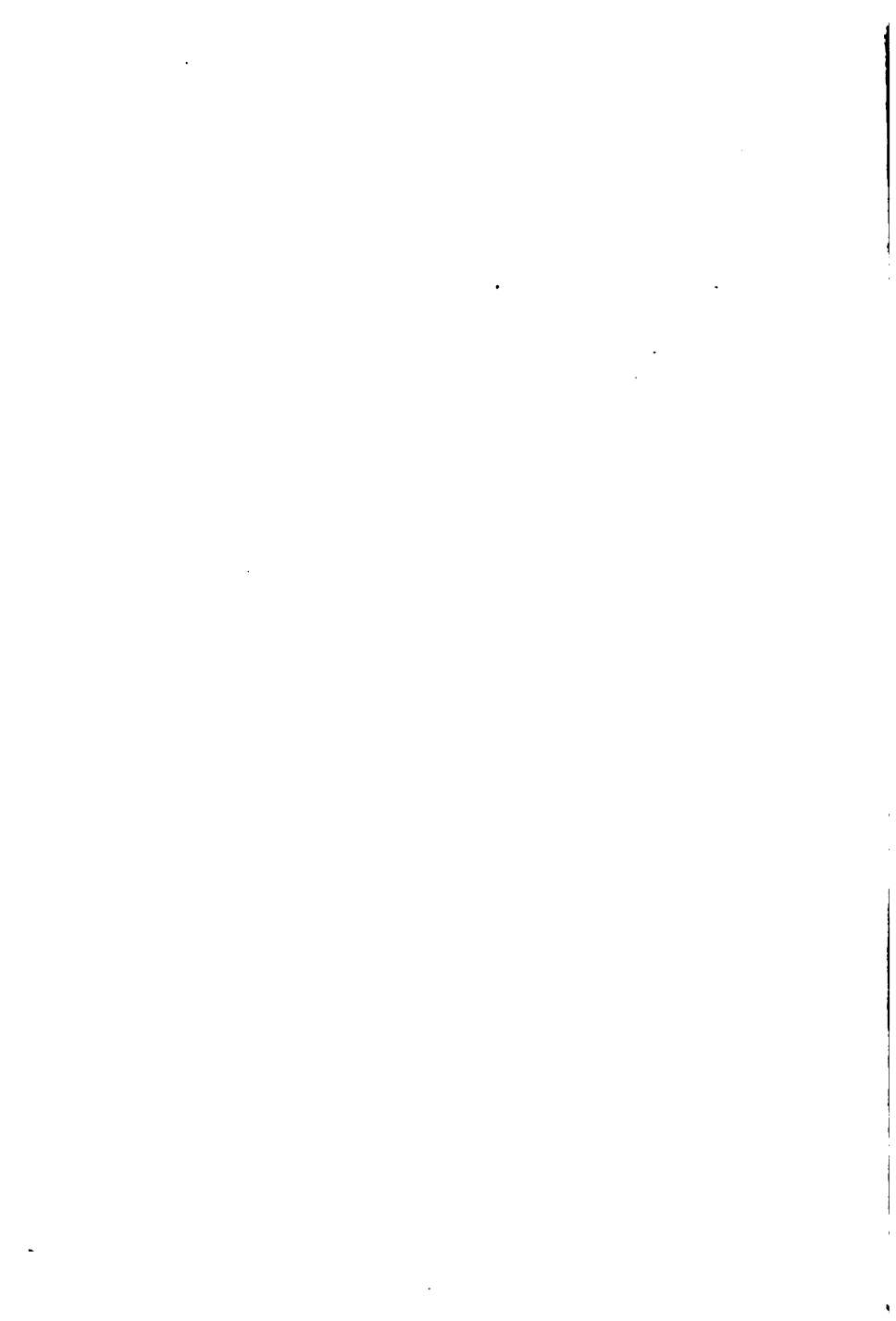
It was, indeed, the two delegates. They had been chosen because they were accustomed to diplomatic missions; and, moreover, they spoke French.

They came up—bent themselves double.

They presented the duke's excuses. "Monseigneur was unable to come—he was presiding at the Assembly of Notables with Monseigneur Adalbert."



The Delegates



"Ah, by the way," said grandma, "how is the little fellow? and Sœurette?"

"Monseigneur Adalbert is well—and the little girl also. They 're playing together on the terrace all the time."

Then the delegates explained their mission. They had come to invite the heroine to land in the evening. The people were preparing a monster welcome for her. Immense crowds were coming in from all parts. Nothing like it had been seen in the memory of man. Monseigneur, the duke, would remain to give orders, that all might be worthy of the expected guest. The duke begged Miss Rowrer to be present with him afterward at the reception in the throne-room—and he laid his heart at her feet.

"There—just as I thought!" was Ethel's reflection. "The duke believes it was I!"

Ethel turned to Suzanne: "Ask Mlle. Helia—or, rather, no! it 's useless to ask her; she would not come—I know her! But she will not refuse it to me as a service," she argued within herself, "we will go together, with Helia at the head. She shall have her triumph this evening."

Suzanne showed signs of trouble. The delegates had recognized her and bowed low. The name "Helia" struck them. It came back with the memories of their strange diplomatic soirée.

"What is the matter?" Ethel asked Suzanne, sharply. "Do you know them?"

"No—that is—yes!" answered Suzanne.

"Really, is it yes or no?"

"*Eh bien*, yes."

"Where did you see them? At Paris?—at the duke's place?"

"At the duke's—yes—that is—no! It was one evening when Mademoiselle Helia—"

"Do they know Helia?"

"No!—or, rather—"

"Or rather yes?" interrupted Ethel.

"I am trying to tell you—"

"Good—you 'll tell me later."

The delegates thought they were talking of the evening reception.

"Messieurs," Ethel said to them, "it is understood. Thank the duke—I shall be there at the appointed hour."

The delegates bowed, and Ethel accompanied them to the rail.

"Be careful not to fall, M. Zrnitschka, M. Bjelopawlitji! See, messieurs," she added, pointing to a tarpaulin which they were arranging at the yacht's side, "that is a bath-room—it 's a tropical invention. The tarpaulin is held by bars stretched out on the top of the water and making a rigid square. It 's a genuine bath-tub, five meters long and wide, and four feet deep. That does not prevent me from jumping over it when I wish, and I take a little turn in the open. That is the real bath-tub for me!" And she pointed to the sea.

Ethel could not keep her face straight at the frightened look of the delegates, who kept on bowing and bowing as they clambered down the steps.

"What ought I to say?" Suzanne was thinking within herself. She would have to tell all the stories about the

duke and Helia, and perhaps about Phil,—“and I who don’t know how to lie!”

Ethel quietly took her seat by grandma, without speaking to Suzanne of anything at all.

“It ’s Helia’s day,” she thought. “It would be bad taste to crush the brave young girl with my dresses when she has only simple things.”

“Very well, Suzanne,” Ethel said aloud. “I do not need you for the present. See that everything is ready for this evening—a simple street-gown.”

Ethel’s curiosity, however, had been excited. What could there have been in common between the duke and Helia and Suzanne? She now remembered a few passing words. Caracal had finally told her his story of the Louvre gardener, and Adam and Eve. She recalled his expressions. Phil never spoke to her of Helia, although he recounted willingly the adventures of his youth. Against this were his occasional embarrassment, certain hidden allusions, and his salon portrait of the young girl in the midst of flowers surrounded by a flight of doves; and then, why should Phil, only yesterday, have dropped his eyes and blushed at the mad bravery of Helia? Did he, then, know the secret of it?

It was not pleasant to Ethel to go into such questions. Helia’s melancholy, and her daring, her seeking for death when she was only twenty—it was not natural! Miss Rowrer did not need to know more. She understood all, so she believed.

CHAPTER VIII

FATA MORGANA TO THE RESCUE!

LATER in the day Suzanne appeared, and timidly begged Miss Rowrer to excuse her. "Mademoiselle Helia has gone from the tarpaulin—she is swimming straight for the cliff. If Miss Rowrer would be good enough to go on deck, perhaps Mademoiselle Helia—" As for her, Suzanne, she could do nothing—she had called in vain.

Miss Rowrer followed Suzanne, but Helia was already far away.

"She would not listen to me," said Suzanne. "I don't know what came over her."

"But where is she going?"

"To the rocks off there, Miss Rowrer."

Suzanne pointed to the shoals on which the sea was breaking.

"Well," Ethel said, to quiet Suzanne, "Helia is not lost. If I had been on the deck I would have asked her not to do it. But one who swims as she does has nothing to fear. I only hope she won't delay, so as to be back in time for the evening's reception."

"If only she comes back!"

"Oh, now! it's only child's play for her," said Miss Rowrer, following with her glass Helia's movements.

For any one else than Helia the undertaking would have been hazardous, because of the eddies among the rocks. She might also hit against some point just hidden beneath the water. There was a striking contrast between the immense cliff and the almost imperceptible swimmer, who was going farther and farther away.

The marvelous sky had become more magnificent still. The sea was resplendent, and now and then a luminous wake showed behind Helia; and then it would suddenly be quenched in the blackness of the shoal water.

"How little Helia seems in all that immensity!" Ethel said to Phil, who had joined her.

"She has reached the rocks—she is going up them," said Phil.

"Oh! never fear for her; I understand what urges her on: it is still that love of danger which made her heroic yesterday. Have no fear for Helia," Ethel said to Suzanne, as she gave her the glass. "If I thought there was the least danger, I would send out the boat; but I think she—she wishes to be alone; we will respect her desire."

That day Ethel had a thousand things to do: letters to write; her preparations for the evening; to choose the music which was to be played on board during the reception on land. Especially there was an old-time melody which she had heard Helia singing in a low voice in her cabin. Ethel had a muffled rehearsal of it in the forecastle. She wished to keep it as a surprise for Helia in the evening, when she should enter the throne-room. She counted greatly on the effect; the music would come in waves mingled with the sea-breeze, filling the night

with harmony and encircling Helia with her favorite melody. There were also flowers to bring and other orders to give.

While they were thus making ready her triumph, Helia, who was now stretched out on the seaweed amid the rocks, dreamed, with her mind far away. The effort she had made and the coolness of the water had calmed her. The ardent light shone on her damp neck and arms as on rose-colored marble. The wet bathing-dress clung to her round limbs, and her heavy hair rolled over her shoulders. She was like a dreaming Naiad clinging to the sharp rocks above a sunken Atlantis.

All around her the sky heaped up tumultuous splendor. Fata Morgana was disporting herself in the burning mists.

Helia looked at the glowing apotheosis so far above her, as inaccessible as her dream. Then her eyes fell to the craggy ruins so much more in harmony with her thoughts. The green light upon the sea was reflected in her clear eyes. Beneath the transparent waters she could perceive a strange vegetation gently waving its leaves. Ah, how well one might rest down there, lying on the golden sands amid flowers which seemed alive!

Suddenly Helia blushed for herself—no! away with the ugly thought! All her pride revolted against it. Really, she was going mad! This idle, artificial life had been gnawing at her ever since she had come on the yacht. What was she doing with these happy ones of the earth, in the midst of their luxury? She saw clearly that Phil and Miss Rowrer were made for each other. No, she would not go to America to be exposed to such

continual torture as the sight of their love would be—to see Phil living serenely on, without remorse and without regret. She must escape as soon as possible from him, and go back to her dressing-room, smelling of patchouli, and adorned with its broken mirror. There, at least, she would feel at home!

Helia, with her eyes fixed upon the sea, was building a hundred schemes. First of all, one thing was certain. She would now dare to attempt feats which she had never done before—which no one had ever done before. She might break her neck—well, it would be dying on the field of honor!

Her success should be dazzling. She would conquer New York, London, and Berlin. They would cover her with flowers, which she would crush beneath her feet as she retired behind the scenes. She would turn her back on the hall thundering with bravos, and would answer to her calls not by a flip-flap entrance like some peasant mountebank! No, she would find some unheard-of feat to make the hall grow pale with fright. Ah! she was not good for love; they would see what she was worth for terror!

Her brain went on inventing exercises and seeing movements, composing sensational numbers. She would have all the managers at her feet—Barrasford, in England, and Krokowski, in St. Petersburg. At Moscow the Boyards should offer her diamonds, and she would throw them back into their faces! She would be an artiste, only an artiste, the greatest artiste of all time! She would not be of those who are afraid to spoil their beauty or tear their maillots at the trapeze.

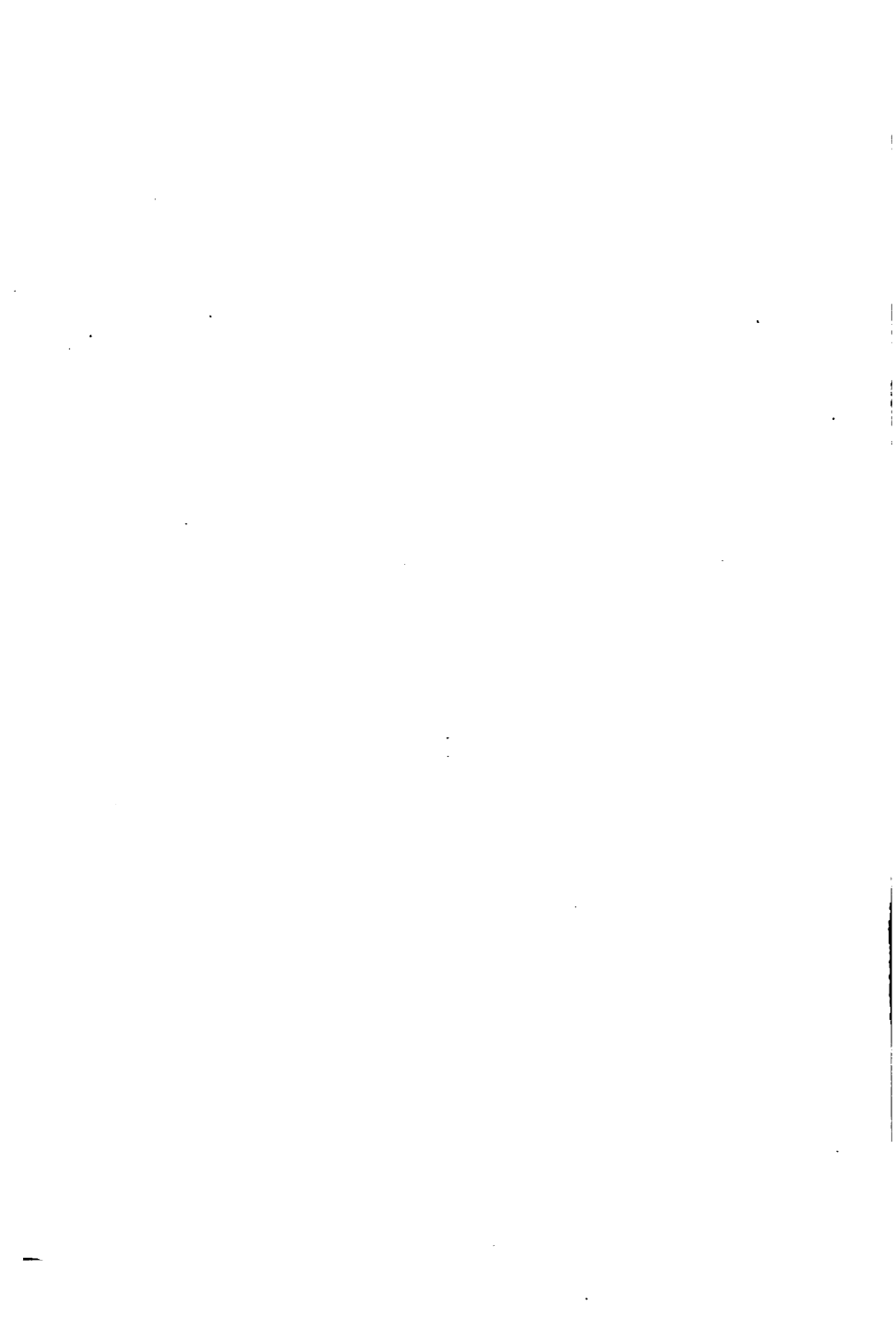
She would have the number preceded by orchestral silences, suddenly breaking like a thunder-storm. She alone would do more than all the others, more than the Alexes and the Hanlons, more than fifty Leamy sisters. And on the tight-rope she would do more than the Omers, on her hands more than Bartholdi, on the carpet more than the Kremos or Scheffers! She could see herself, to the roaring of the band, with the crowd beneath her feet—the crowd of lying mouths, of soft and cowardly hearts; and she would cast at them a look of scorn while taking her flight to the roof.

She would have posters on all the walls in the least village town—a Gymnast, in England; a Gymnasiarque, in France; in Germany, a Bravourturnerin,—great posters to dazzle the Ochsenmaulsalatsfabrikanten! That would be fortune and glory! Oh, what a dog's life! How could a man like Phil live with falsehood in his heart, and never a word of excuse? She would have given him up, she would have understood! She was not made for him; so be it. Phil could not give Miss Rowrer a rival like Helia—no! He had only to ask her pardon to obtain it—a kind word, and a kiss, and good-by. But no! there was not even that. Ah, Phil, Phil; he did not even take the trouble to give her back her word!

Helia's fever had passed, and her dreams were calmed. She felt herself very lowly and little, crushed at the foot of the cliff—herself like a bit of jetsam amid the broken fragments of the rock. She dipped her hand in the water and amused herself by letting it run out between her fingers in a shining shower. Or, again, she



“‘Help me!’ he cried”



plunged her arms to the bottom, tearing up the sea-flowers, the dainty algæ, and placing them in her hair, mingling them with the unbound tresses. Then she bent over, to look at herself in the water, like a child.

"I am really like the Morgana in Phil's picture," she thought.

Meanwhile, even in the little creek where Helia was looking at herself, the water had grown less calm, and a current was rushing out to the open sea. Helia stood, stretched her limbs, and looked at the yacht.

"Come!" she said to herself, "*en route!* It is time to go!"

She was just taking her spring when she stopped short, listening. Uncertain cries were borne in to her on the breeze. They came from the shore. All that part of the bay, and the castle itself, were hidden from her by a wall of cliffs.

"What can be the matter?" she asked herself. "Are those cries of distress?"

Just then, a little boat with a child for its sole passenger floated out before her, amid the shoals, borne on by the ebbing current.

The child had let drop the oars. He was holding with both hands to the boat's gunwale and looking out to sea with his eyes dilated with fear.

"Help me!" he cried.

It was the little Duke Adalbert.

The boy had been kept awake the night before by the cries of "Morgana!" Confounding reality with legend, he had resolved to go to the yacht which was in the bay; and there he would see once more that beautiful maiden

whom Phil had painted. He came down to the foot of the castle, and loosened the boat from the old ring in the wall to which it was fastened. Alone he set out to the open sea. They had seen him too late; the current had seized the boat, and the little duke was lost!

Just then a violent shock capsized the boat on a rock almost level with the surface and threw the child into the water. As he disappeared beneath the foam he lifted his arms to heaven with a supreme appeal: "St. Morgana, save me!"

"Adalbert, Monseigneur Adalbert!" cried Helia, recognizing him, "fear nothing, I am here!"

It was the affair of a moment, and with a daring dive, in which she risked dashing herself against a rock, Helia grasped the boy beneath the waves and brought him back, fainting, to the light of day.

"What anxiety they must be having on shore!" thought Helia. "What must be the duke's despair! They must think the child is drowned, that there is no possible remedy; perhaps there is not a single boat in the port! Now, then, Helia, courage! You've done harder things than this in your life. Into the sea and take back monseigneur!"

Helia was standing on the rock, with the boy in her arms. At a glance, she saw that the water of the different currents was colored differently. That which came from the shore was muddy and yellow with sand; that from the deep sea was dark green. Into this, without hesitation, Helia threw herself, holding Adalbert on one arm, and swimming with the other, in superb effort.

As soon as she had turned the cliff, she saw the crowd

on the shore, close to the water, very far away. They, too, now saw her, for a great cry reached her ear. It strengthened and comforted her.

She was crossing an eddy full of seaweed torn away by the currents, from which she could issue with difficulty. If the boy had come to himself, they would both have been lost. Luckily, he remained inert, with his head on Helia's shoulder. Slowly she disengaged herself and kept on her way toward the shore.

Now there was a deep silence. She could see the multitude nearer. She could distinguish details—women praying on their knees, and groups crowding toward the sea. They ought to come out to her, instead of remaining there motionless! But everybody seemed struck powerless by amazement. The setting sun behind her was doubtless dazzling their eyes, for a strange glow, all red and gold, lighted up the city. Weariness overwhelmed her,—could she ever reach the shore? The child's weight exhausted Helia. Truly, the people must be stupid not to come out to her. Could no one see that she was tired—that all her strength had been taken—that she could do no more?

Soon she felt the sand beneath her feet. She was still far from the shore, but the beach sank away very slowly, and, half walking and half swimming, she kept advancing. Now it was easier for her; the water was only breast-high. She advanced steadily, lifting Adalbert in her arms as if to say: "He is saved! Here he is! Come and take him!"

But while she kept on advancing, no one came toward her.

“What is the matter with them?” thought Helia. “They do not stir—they are recoiling even, as I go toward them. What is it frightens them so?”

Instinctively, Helia turned her head. She saw only the waste sea and the great marvelous sky, with its depths of purple and gold, and immense crimson cloud forming an arch above her.

When Helia first appeared, the people had given a great cry, and then there was silence. A thrill ran through the multitude. “Who is coming thus from the open sea? What wonderful being have our cries of terror awakened?”

They saw the superb maiden issuing from the waves and bringing back in her arms the little Duke Adalbert, Morgania’s hope. What if it were she—Morgana!—bringing back fortune and the future? Would it not be the complete accomplishing of the prophecy at the date announced and foretold?

Helia was moved at the terrified aspect of the people, with their mute faces fixed upon her, with their ecstatic eyes. The crowd drew aside at her approach, and a great empty circle opened wide around her.

Helia stopped. The water reached her knees. At this spot the sea was as placid as a lake, and the beach was as smooth as a floor. Only two or three moss-grown rocks lifted their heads above the water. Helia would have shown herself in a maillot unhesitatingly before a million men, but she was greatly embarrassed where she was, half naked, and with her wet costume clinging to her body.

Seeing that no one came to her assistance, she placed

the little duke gently on the mossy rock and took her resolution. She would return to the yacht by the current leading out to sea. She was again fit and rested by her walk over the sands. Moreover, rid of the child's weight, it would be no more than play for her.

Helia, with her eyes fixed on the crowd, pointed to the child with her hand, and retired slowly backward. When the water reached her waist she swam out vigorously toward the yacht. The dazzling sun still kindled the sea, flooding everything with its flames of crimson. They could not see her from the shore in such a rush of splendor from heaven; and while she went on and on, just as the sun was sinking below the horizon, an immense clamor came out to her, magnified by the echoes, like mysterious voices issuing from plains and mountains.

It was the people on the shore acclaiming Morgana!

CHAPTER IX

STRICKEN IN TRIUMPH

HELIA was far away, swimming toward the yacht, before the duke came down from the castle where he was presiding at the reception of the notables. At the time when the child was carried away by the current no one dared tell the duke the terrible news; but now the cries of enthusiasm grew and grew. Adalbert was saved! When the father clasped his child in his arms upon the beach, he all but fainted with joy.

Adalbert, coming out of his swoon, kissed his father, and looked around him to find some one. The people cried: "Miracle!" As for the duke, he did not see where the miracle was. Only Miss Rowrer, so he thought, could have had the pluck to do yesterday's deed at the Drina; and she alone would be capable of taking the bay for her bath-tub, as the delegates had told him. No doubt she had been on some rock near the place where Adalbert's boat had capsized.

What means had he for acknowledging the immense service she had now rendered him? It was a unique occasion, and the duke resolved to grasp it for expressing his gratitude to Miss Rowrer. Listening to his heart,

rather than to his reason, he bound himself by oaths to do so in presence of his people.

"I know not who it is that yesterday saved hundreds of my subjects; I know not who it is that but now has saved my son. Never has a duchess done so much for our country. We might think it was Morgana herself, whom our legends have announced. Please God she may be free and may deign to accept my hand and share my throne. We have need of so valiant a duchess!"

The notables took up the acclaim: "Long live the duchess! Long live Morgana!"

The people continued thronging the beach, waiting for the coming of the "duchess," as they already called her, and talking over the words of the duke, who in a moment's time had won back his popularity.

When their first emotion had passed, this rude populace understood full well that Morgana and the beautiful heroine of the Drina must be one of the foreigners come lately from beyond the seas in the white ship. They repeated over to each other how much the country already owed her. Legends began to form about her. They spoke of a coming distribution of food and clothing to the crowd of refugees. One might have thought she had come expressly to fulfil the people's desire and stir them with new hope. The duke saw all this enthusiasm for the "foreign lady" running onward like a flame; and his heart swelled with joy. A whole people would express his love and speak for him, crying from the depths of their hearts: "We love you! Be our duchess!"

And he, the duke, as he had sworn in presence of his

assembled people, would say to Miss Rowrer: "You have saved my country and my son: will you not stay in Morgana, to be the pride and the happiness of my house?"

The events upon the Drina, and that mysterious sympathy which grows in popular crises, had shaken the whole country. The prophecies of the sorceress had been realized point by point. Even in the remotest mountains the shepherds spoke among themselves of this woman, so young and beautiful, who was invulnerable, and whose heroism had repulsed the enemy. The villages were excited; and men reached the city with their rifles on their shoulders. Everywhere, it was one long acclamation for Morgana. The peddlers of pious pictures went here and there with icons in their mules' harness and singing in her honor heroic *prismés*. As if every one were waiting for coming events, the mountain tracks and paths across the plain were filled on every side with an enthusiastic crowd.

That very evening the duke was to receive the "duchess" amid his people's acclaim. Great bonfires were to be lighted on the mountain-peaks at the moment of her disembarking, and from one mountain to the other, by signal from the city, the flames should announce her coming. The sorceress, in the depths of her grotto, should see at her feet the night flaming up like the dawn.

On the beach, where Morgana had brought the fainting boy, they built up hastily a rough landing-place. They wished her coming to be at the very spot where she had appeared in her glory; and they strewed leaves and flowers along the way which she should follow to the Hall of Ancestors. Never had so violent and sudden



“The peddler of pious pictures”



a movement upset Morgania. The acclaim which would salute the "Lady" would be irresistible. It would issue from the whole people; and the duke, swept on by a current stronger than himself, would only have to let events find a way for themselves.

Everybody was stirred, even Caracal, who was in the company of the duke, when a cannon-shot, as had been agreed, announced from the castle the arrival of the boat bringing the "duchess." The crowd stood in rows on each side of the way. The duke, at the head of the body of notables, stood alone.

Behind him the voivodes, in their glittering costume, formed their lines, belted for war and sword in hand.

After the duke's words of welcome, the heroic maiden was to pass beneath an archway of these swords crossed above her, like Maria Theresa between her Magyars; and, as she issued from beneath their deadly glitter, joyous hymns would break forth, and little children strew flowers before her as a symbol of days of happiness after days of battle. Then would begin the triumphal march toward the Hall of the Throne.

All hearts were beating, for now they could perceive the boat coming toward them. Caracal fixed his monocle, like the powerful and subtle observer that he was, and made ready to note everything.

Religious silence took the place of the tumult of voices. They could see distinctly in the boat two young women holding each other by the hand. Each of them was dressed with great simplicity: it was Helia and Ethel. The light of the torches flashed vividly upon them. They seemed to rise out of the night; and when the sailors

lifted their oars to disembark them on the landing where the duke was waiting, there was not a gesture, not a cry. The people heeded only them. No attention was given to the two personages following them, a young girl and a young man—Suzanne and Phil.

The duke bowed low before Ethel, taking her hand with an impassioned and reverent gesture. Then he spoke. Those who were near him could hear his voice tremble.

“How am I to thank you, Miss Rowrer, you who have saved my son! Morgania also owes you everything; without you I know the villayets of Albania would have arisen. Everything was ready to crush us! But the defeat of the enemy, exaggerated from mouth to mouth, has taken on proportions of a disaster! You have done what, before you, my ancestresses, Thilda, Rhodaïs, and Bertha, did; and like Morgana herself you have brought back in your arms the luck of Morgania, my son Adalbert! Behold all this people: for them you are she whom our legends of a thousand years announce! Miss Rowrer, I owe you everything; my whole life will not be sufficient for the acknowledgment of your services!”

“Monseigneur,” interrupted Ethel, in a grave voice, “the heroine, the valiant woman, she who expected no recompense, who knew the danger and coolly faced it, she whom your legends announce, and who has saved your people and your child: it is not I—it is Helia!”

And taking Helia by the hand, Miss Rowrer made her pass in front of her, while she herself stood modestly back.

“Ah!” gasped the duke.

There was a little of everything in his "Ah!" A man falling from a balloon must utter such an "Ah!" when he crashes against the ground.

Meanwhile, twice the cheers burst forth. Hymns of welcome were intoned, for silence had been kept till then. The duke had appeared to be addressing himself to both the young girls. The people did not know exactly which one might be the duchess; but their enthusiasm knew no bounds all the same. A great eddy pushed the crowd in a mass along the way to the castle, amid the blare of trumpets and rattling of rifle-shots. The voivodes formed the archway of steel above the heads of the duke and Helia, followed by Ethel. Endless cheering saluted them: "Long live the duke! Long live the duchess! Long live Morgana!"

"Well!" thought Caracal, "this is getting to be amusing. I had thought all my chances lost, but they are coming back. Miss Ethel is still free! Helia a duchess! Well, stranger things have been seen; but all the same it is funny. After my 'House of Glass' and 'Worms from a Dung-hill' I shall study from nature a ducal marriage and make it a *roman à clef*! I shall write up every class of society—bourgeois, peasants, and princes! He certainly will marry her: you can't trifle with an oath among such a population of fools; there are currents you can't stem."

And so Caracal shouted louder than the others: "Long live Morgana! Long live the duchess!" Then he offered his arm to Miss Rowrer, who refused it!

"What are they crying 'Long live the duchess!' for?" she asked Caracal, as they issued from beneath the steel

arch, surrounded by children who wafted kisses toward them and bombarded them with flowers. Caracal recounted the oath which had been taken in presence of the people, and before God. The duke had sworn to offer the heroine his titles and his throne.

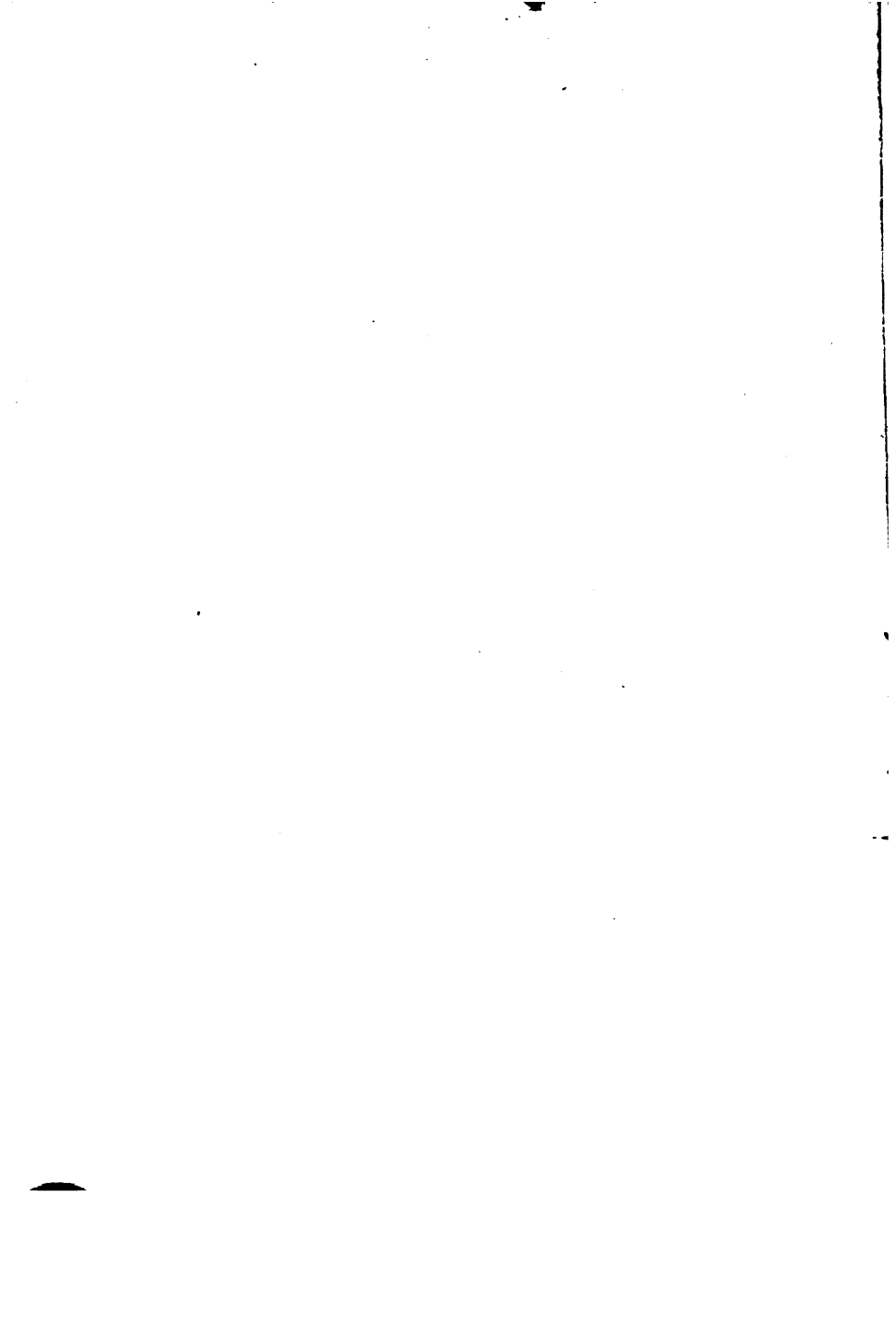
"Poor duke!" thought Ethel; "he really believed it was I—otherwise he would have sworn to nothing. Well, let it be so! We shall see if an oath is a sacred thing, or if women are only dolls for amusement. We shall see if the duke is a man!"

Ethel now knew the whole story. On the yacht, that very evening, she had chanced to hear Helia talking with Suzanne. Their few words had been a revelation to her. She had already imagined what now she knew. The cow painting in the Luxembourg, the whole little combination invented by Caracal, all the coarse horse-play—ah! if Phil thought she was going to think less of him because of it, how mistaken he was! All that was about as important to her as Mr. Charley's hair, brushed like a horse's mane, and his velvet trousers—less than nothing at all! But Phil had other reasons to blush for himself, indeed. She understood his embarrassed air when he spoke of Helia. That he should promise marriage with an oath, should give hopes of happiness to Helia and lift her above her position, and then thrust her back into her hard life—that Phil, a Christian and an American, should do a thing like that! Ethel also knew the duke's love-making to Helia. Poor Helia! simply a plaything for those two men!

She looked with admiration at the splendid couple



"The duke stood alone"



before her,—the duke and Helia,—without a glance at the two men beside her—Phil and Caracal.

Helia was superb. The red lights, shaken by the wind, illuminated her. The popular enthusiasm was beyond description; the crowd pressed forward behind the torch-bearers along the way. They touched her garments like the relics of a saint. The women lifted up their children to make them see Morgana. Young girls sang in chorus, while young men twirled their sabers aloft in warlike rhythm.

All at once, above the crowd, far away in the mountains flames arose; the bonfires blazed up on each side of the bay and over the cliffs. An immense blaze, like a giant torch, threw great shadows and blinding streaks of light over the city. Its glow appeared through the night, leaping over space from peak to peak, to the far horizon, where it mingled with the stars.

Helia and Ethel were amazed at the grandeur of the sight, and at the loving ardor of the crowd, in whose eyes, too, the flame seemed burning. Their own beauty struck everybody; surely the new duchess would be the most popular that Morgana had ever known, to judge from the delirious enthusiasm let loose by her presence.

“What has taken hold of them?” thought Helia. “One might say I had done something extraordinary.”

Helia for a moment was separated from Ethel. Beyond them the way, lonely and bare, mounted up to the castle. Guards watched over the approach. High above them the stained-glass window of Morgana reflected glitteringly the torches and bonfires. In a few steps more Helia, on the duke’s arm, would leave the people

behind her and mount up, followed by the nobles, to the Hall of Ancestors.

But just then there was a great rush forward, and as Helia, in real fright at this wild enthusiasm, pressed against the duke, she felt a sharp pain between her shoulders. She gave a little cry, and struggled toward the open space before her; but her breath failed and she fell.

"Oh, the coward!" she murmured. "He would never have dared strike me to my face!"

"What is the matter?" the duke said, grasping her in his arms, "you are bleeding!"

"Oh! what has happened?" asked Ethel, who came up at this moment, followed by Suzanne. "Helia! what has happened to you?"

"He has killed me!" said Helia.

"It is he who has done it!" cried Suzanne, with a terrible look, searching for some one in the crowd.

"He—who?"

"Socrate!"

It was indeed Socrate. But he was no longer there. He had already disappeared into the shadow, seized by avenging hands, mangled by a people's fury, trampled under foot into blood and mud!

Helia had guessed rightly. Socrate had come on board the *Columbia* at Marseilles, where they had hastily taken on firemen. Under the exasperation of want, he took this occasion to follow Helia. He had learned as he prowled around the circus that she was going to Morgania on Miss Rowrer's yacht, and he was not the man to let go his prey.

The events of the last day above all else had stirred him to fury. Helia a duchess! Helia in grandeur, while he, the misunderstood genius, should drag out his life in an attic! Ah! you will not be mine? Then you shall be no one's! He had seized the occasion and planted his knife between Helia's shoulders.

"Helia!" sobbed Suzanne. "Do you hear me? Answer!"

But Helia did not. The duke and Phil, terrified, bore her to the throne-room. The torches cast a tragic light upon the group. Immense shadows lengthened themselves out before them. The duke and Phil, bearing Helia, slowly advanced. The hall opened high before them, lighted dimly.

CHAPTER X

“ON YOUR KNEES!”

THEY laid Helia down at the foot of Phil's picture, on the great ancestral throne on which the duke had hoped to seat himself beside Miss Rowrer. The iron candelabrum, hanging from the arch, lighted the hall. But Morgana's stained window, more than all the rest, blazed with sanguinary flashes. This time it was not the sunset, as the duke had described it to Miss Rowrer, when he showed her the engraving in Paris; it was the light of torches and of the giant bonfire shining through it from without. The heroic statues, Thilda, Rhoda's the Slave, and Bertha the Horsewoman, seemed to live again beneath the glow. The flashes of light from the window seemed to make them palpitate. One would have said that joy swelled their marble breasts when Helia, whose bodice had been undone, and whose wounds were bandaged, opened her eyes and breathed freely as she asked: “Where am I?”

“Oh, what a fright you 've given us!” said Suzanne; “but now you 're saved. Do you suffer?”

Helia was not suffering. To die was nothing,—but to fall, struck from behind by such a man!

“If you had been there, Phil,” Helia said, speaking

low, "you would have protected me, would you not? Oh, with you I should fear nothing. Give me your hand and stay with me!"

Phil, with downcast eyes full of tears, took her hand.

"Look me in the face; why do you lower your eyes, Phil?" she said, so that he alone could hear her. She added, with an indescribable regret in her voice: "Have I ever reproached you? Look me in the face, as in the old days! I wish you to be happy. I do not wish you to be sad!"

From the city came a confused murmur, like the noise of the sea; and then there were long moments of silence. The nobles had not dared to enter the hall. The people's deep anxiety was making itself felt. Suzanne, meanwhile, was arranging the cushions under Helia's head. The duke had gone a little away.

"Yes," he was saying to himself, "Miss Rowrer will understand the sacrifice I am making for her. I fail in my word, it is true, but she will be grateful to me for not having made Helia her rival. As to the people, Miss Rowrer's millions will make them forget my perjury."

Ethel, with Caracal at her elbow, gave to a servant the basin of water and bloody cloths. Impassive as the marble ancestresses, she turned her clear eyes on Phil and the duke.

"Phil," Helia continued, as she pressed his hand, "you promised me once—do you remember?—when you loved me, in the old days? I understand, many things have passed since; and you are no longer the same man. Come here, Phil, nearer, nearer! I want to tell a secret in your ear. I have loved only you, Phil; every day

I have waited for you, and you never came! I was mad, I know; it was impossible! But when one is young one is ignorant—and I believed you! Now you love another. Phil, I forgive you; but leave your hand in mine.”

Phil was silent and red with shame. Ah, indeed, he remembered! Helia felt his heart beating in the hand which pressed her own. An intense emotion overpowered him. He had the fearful calm which goes before a storm. Neither the duke nor Phil spoke, motionless, by the side of Helia, who was resting tranquilly, while they made a room ready for her.

“You can get up and go to it by yourself,” said Suzanne. “You’re safe. You have n’t lost much blood—Socrate’s blow missed!”

“What!” murmured Ethel. “Our heroic Helia is going to die in the presence of these two men who loved her, without one of them asking her pardon for their false oaths?”

“They accuse me of being cynical, but I should be more loyal than that,” said Caracal, with his gaze fixed on Ethel.

“Look at your work, M. Caracal,” Ethel replied, in a low tone of contempt. “Those two men are your pupils. The duke, who will not see that the fortune of nations is courage and respect for promises—and Phil, whom I thought more noble,—look at him, blushing with shame, lowering his eyes,—these are the men according to your heart! They are the men who consider woman a plaything, and abandon her when she ceases to please! I forgive you your Richard the Lion-hearted, your blackmailing, and your infamies, but look

at the result of your bad example and ignoble theories! When you threw Helia at Socrate that you might study passion cheaply, without knowing it you put the dagger in the assassin's hand. Helia struck down from behind,—it is your work! The duke, forgetful of duty and aiming at Helia for his mistress, it is your work! Phil, with his false promises, is worthy of you! Two men spoiled, one assassin, and a dying woman—look at your work, M. Caracal!"

The "subtle observer," a poor human rag blown down by a breath, collapsed into a chair.

The great window still threw its burning glow upon the throne. The marble ancestors, dimly lighted, seemed to lift their heads to curse the feeble duke. They formed a circle round the hall and the throne where Helia was resting—Helia, brave as Rhodaïs, intrepid as Thilda, invulnerable as Bertha—Helia, the Morgana announced and foretold. The duke was pale and grave. He looked at Helia, and then turned his head toward Ethel.

All at once Ethel saw Helia rise upon her elbow, with one hand convulsively grasping that of Phil, and the other signing to listen. Through the half-open door floated a far-away melody, so weak, so far away—Phil felt its thrill in his heart.

Le roi fait battre le tambour
Pour appeler ses dames,
Et la première qu'il a vue
Lui a ravi son âme.

The king had the drum beat
To call out his ladies—
And the first one he sees
Steals away his soul.

It seemed to come with the sea-breeze from beyond the murmurs of the land. It was the music of the yacht playing the air chosen by Ethel, that air which Helia hummed when she was alone. Ethel had foreseen the hour when Helia would be entering the throne-room. The music from the yacht was to greet her triumph. Now it seemed to be soothing her agony.

"Listen, Phil, listen!" said Helia; "do you remember?"

Phil remembered all and saw all once more—his first love, the little Saint John, the Louvre paradise, all his promises! His youth blossomed in his heart.

In his breast rose a flame which burned away every selfish thought. Yes, he had promised! Helia had lived in that only hope; he had let her fall from the height of her dream! He had shut off the future from her. He had dug a pit with his selfishness, and pushed Helia into it when she ceased to please! He had turned his back on her despair!

It seemed to him that a giant hand was bending him low before Helia and a voice was saying: "Down on your knees!"

Quickly, quickly and low, as one might confess a crime, Phil spoke:

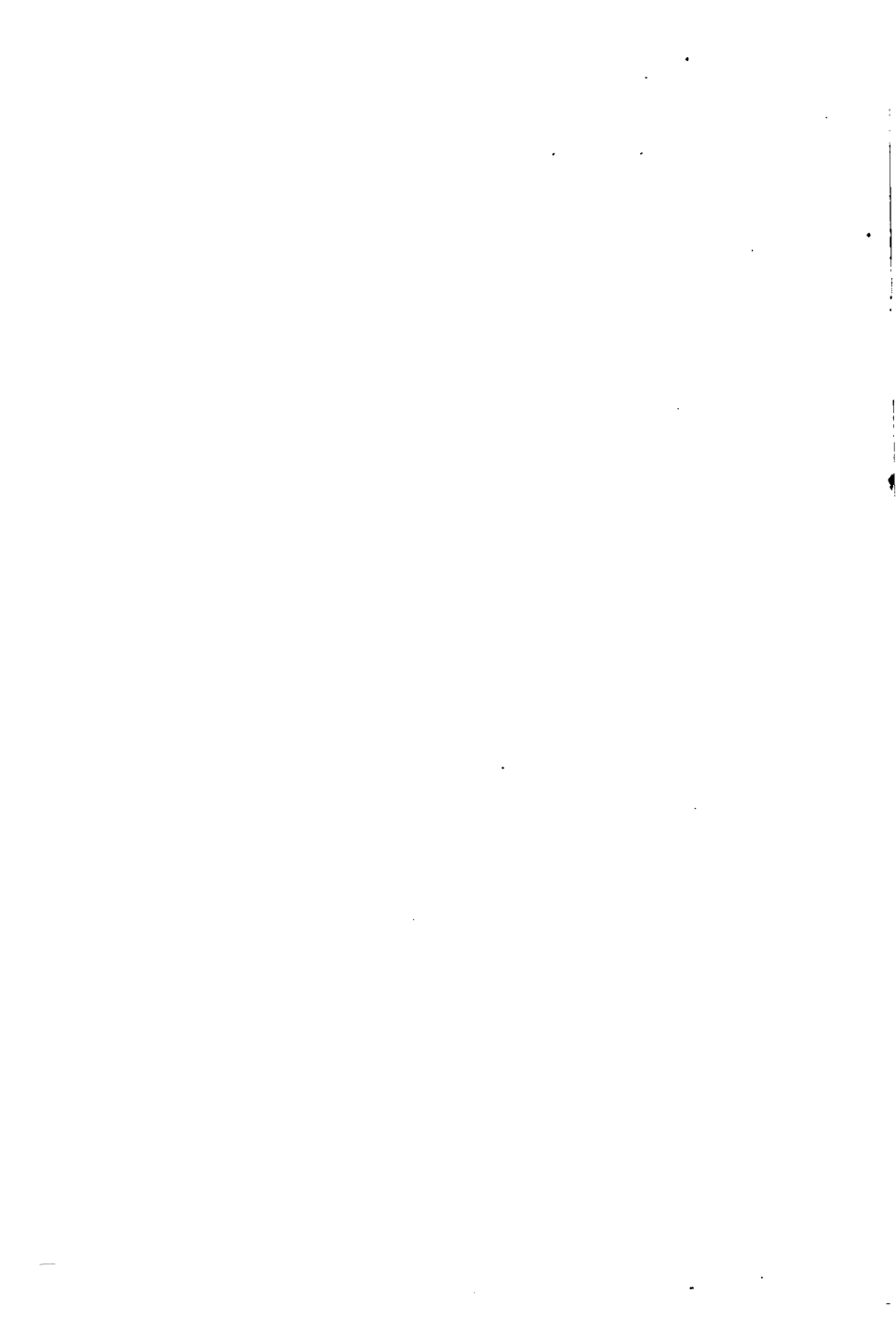
"Yes, I was wrong—yes, I promised. I ask pardon, Helia! How I shall thank God if he will let you live, that I may blot out my fault!"

"Oh, Phil!" murmured Helia.

"I love you still," said Phil; "and you shall be my wife. You will see how happy we shall be—Helia, forgive me!"



“ ‘My people await their duchess’ ”



"Let me kiss your lips!" said Helia.

Ethel had drawn near, followed by Caracal. There was a strange light in her eyes.

"See," she said to Caracal. "Glory to those who are struck down by the light like St. Paul. There is joy in heaven for the repenting sinner!"

"Will you ever pardon me?" stammered Caracal.

"Perhaps; tears wash away many things," added Ethel, remembering how Phil had already pardoned Caracal because he had seen him weeping.

"That is a man worth loving, a rare thing," Ethel thought as she looked at Phil. Helia now was sitting up; the wound no longer bled.

"How happy I am!" said Helia.

She wept with joy. Phil was at her knees as in the old days. "Listen," she said, "it is our tune of the old times, Phil! I seem still to be there!"

Phil kissed her hands to hide his tears.

"Phil," said Helia, with a timid look at Ethel, and in a tone so low that it could come only from the heart, "tell me, Phil, am I really fit to be your wife?"

The door opened slowly, a bright light burst into the hall. It was the voivodes coming for information. If a misfortune had happened to one of the maidens, perhaps to their duchess, when they were on the spot, sword in hand to form a sheltering arch above her—what a shame it would be for them! If the duchess was dying, they would pray for her on their knees. They approached in silence. The duke had drawn near Ethel.

"I love you!" he said, speaking low. "See what I have done for you! I swore—but I thought it was you.

There is still time. My people await their duchess. Shall it be you, Miss Rowrer?"

The duke held out his hand in an attitude of deepest respect.

Miss Rowrer stopped him short with a gesture. She had judged the two men. This ruler who would not keep his oath, sworn in the name of his ancestors—he should never be husband of hers. To her titles were nothing, character was all. Calm as Justice, with her eyes fixed straight on the duke, she pointed with her hand to Phil, kneeling beside Helia, and said:

"That is a Man!"

OCT 28 1919

